MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL

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NEON | NOFU | FEATURE | MACHO BOYS
MONIKA ESTRELLA NEGRA & MICHELLE GARZA CERVERA
FURY | BAUS | LOS IMPUESTOS
OURS TO LOSE: WHEN SQUATTERS BECAME HOMEOWNERS

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TOP TENS

Some of our contributors' top ten (or so) things we've reviewed this month. For review consideration, send two copies of vinyl, or one copy of CD-only or demo releases to our PO Box. We review independent punk, garage, and hardcore releases—no major labels!

GRACE AMBROSE

RIÑA / ANTI-SEX – live
XYLITOL – live
NOSFERATU – live
NEON – "Neon / Nazi Schatzi"
PIÑÉN – Vida EP
THE BUG – Humbug EP
GG KING – Another Dimension EP
FRIED EGG – Delirium EP
LIQUIDS – Hot Liqs LP
ROTE ZORA – CS

MATT BADENHOP

ROTE ZORA – CS
NARCOESTADO / AUSENCIA – live
RIÑA / ANTI-SEX – live
KATASTROF – Falska Leenden EP
IMPALERS – Cellar Dweller LP
COWBOY – The Cowboy Album LP
NEON – "Neon / Nazi Schatzi"
PIÑÉN – Vida EP
SACRIFICIO – LP
COMPOSITE – Artemisia EP

MITCH CARDWELL

LIFE STINKS – live
GG KING – Another Dimension EP
NEON – "Neon / Nazi Schatzi"
NOTS – Live at Goner LP
COWBOY – The Cowboy Album LP
WOTZIT – Fish EP
FRIED EGG – Delirium EP
PATSY'S RATS – 45 + live
LIQUIDS – Hot Liqs LP
PLASTIC SHOELACES – live

ROBERT COLLINS

DOOM – live
USA / MEXICO – Laredo LP
GEIGER COUNTER – LP
THE BUG – Humbug EP
PIÑÉN – Vida EP
APOCALYPSE – live
RATS IN THE WALL – live
NOSFERATU – live
LIL HELLRAISER – live
BAIN DE SANG – 12"
SACRIFICIO – LP

JOAN DETORO

THE BUG – Humbug EP
IMPALERS – Cellar Dweller LP
KATASTROF – Falska Leenden EP
LIL HELLRAISER – live
LIQUIDS – Hot Liqs LP
NEON – "Neon / Nazi Schatzi"
NOSFERATU – live
PIÑÉN – Vida EP
POISON IDEA – LP Reissues
THE WORLD – live

LAYLA GIBBON

NEON – "Neon / Nazi Schatzi"
COWBOY – The Cowboy Album LP
RANK/XEROX – live
NOTS – Live at Goner LP
SNIVELLING SHITS – LP
GG KING – Another Dimension EP
SAY LA VEES – Crimson Rose EP
LIQUIDS – Hot Liqs LP
FRIED EGG – Delirium EP

DAN GOETZ

POISON IDEA – War All The Time LP
LIQUIDS – Hot Liqs LP
NOSFERATU – live
THE BUG – Humbug EP
COMPOSITE – Artemisia EP
SAY LA VEES – Crimson Rose EP
IMPALERS – Cellar Dweller LP
ABSOLUT – Demo 2013 EP
ABORTTI 13 – Kansa Taisteli EP
TESTA DURA – Lotta Continua EP

GREG HARVESTER

APPARITION – CS
INTREPID HEARTS – CS
RIVERS EDGE – CS
STRAIGHT CRIMES – CS
FROZEN TEENS – Hey Good Job LP
LIQUIDS – Hot Liqs LP
MOTORSAV – 12"
MEA CULPA – LP
USA / MEXICO – Laredo LP
YOUR PEST BAND – 2xLP

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BEAR TRADE – LP
THE BLENDOURS – No Respect LP
CAVES – Always Why LP
GHOSTED – "Swan Song" 45
GREENSLEEP – LP
MEA CULPA – LP
MEDICTATION – Warm Places LP
ONE BEGGAR SUN – LP
PATSY'S RATS – "Rounding Up" 45
THE TWO TENS – On Repeat CD
THE BOMBPOPS – live

MARISSA MAGIC

INTO THE

ROTTEN RON READY

ANTISEEN – all releases
PIÑÉN – Vida EP
KATASTROF – Falska Leenden EP
ABSOLUT – Demo 2013 EP
SACRIFICIO – LP
NEON – "Neon / Nazi Schatzi"
FLOWERS OF EVIL – City of Fear LP
TESTA DURA – Lotta Continua EP
LIQUIDS – Hot Liqs LP

FRED SCHRUNK

SUN

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Wanna be a shitworker?
Write mrr@maximumrocknroll.com .

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ISSUE #413

Macho Boys, photo by Darren Plank.

This issue marks the first for our new content coordinator, Joan DeToro! You may be familiar with Joan from our "Cowgirls From Heck" column. She moved to San Francisco in early August and we're thrilled to have her here.

We're still looking for distro and art coordinators at the mag—are you ready to drop everything and redefine the future of punk? Get in touch: mrr@maximumrocknroll.com.

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FRONT COVER: Neon, photo courtesy of Water Wing Records.

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TO LIVE A LIE

OXIDANT - Deconstruct EP

Raleigh NC's blistering new powerviolence force. Limited to 300 copies, pick it up while you can. Mem. of Gas Chamber, NoComply, & Running For Cover.

DESPISE YOU/COKE BUST EP

90's powerviolence gods have ascended from LA to match up with DC's 00's hardcore pv powerhouse. Limited splatter copies with stickers and poster.

MAGNUM FORCE - Discography LP

You may think this band only had the EP or the three way split with ACxDC & Sex Prisoner but you'll be surprised there are 45 minutes of blasts here. AZ grindcore at its best.

STILL HOT : WVRM LP, Triac/Sick/Tired LP, Nashgul LP, Cave State/Concussive 7", Burnout 7", Crom tapes

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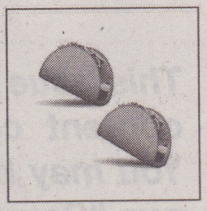

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'A lo-fi instrumental treasure' – Pittsburgh Post Gazette

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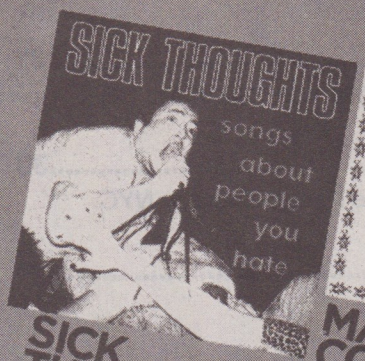
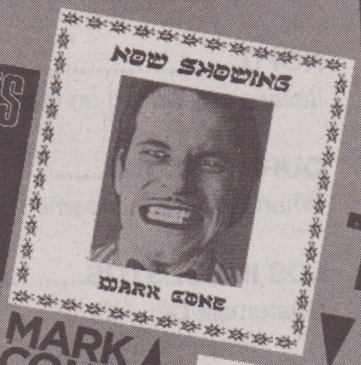


SICK THOUGHTS



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COLUMNS

I must report to you all that this is my last edition of Cowgirls From Heck. I thought that perhaps I could write about metal for forever. Or at least have as many columns as there are Agathocles splits! But no, this column, after about six months, is my last. For clarity's sake, I have not been fired, nor have I decided to stop my involvement with *Maximum Rocknroll*. On the contrary! I decided to end this column because I accepted the position of content coordinator for *MRR*.

Some of you might be worried about what changes a metalhead might bring to *MRR*, or as I am now calling it, *Maximum Heavymetal*. Will the magazine remain the same punk institution that it has been for its whole history? Will readers still be able to learn about DIY punk, or should the reader expect to see a myriad of chicken scratch black metal logos on the cover? Will the magazine change from regular newsprint to blood-soaked newsprint? Well, I am happy to report that this magazine is all about change!

The first thing I did once I got to the *Maximum Heavymetal* compound was topple over the massive (it was over 50 feet tall!) bust of Tim Yohannan's head. It was just where I expected it to be. Once you make your way through the hearth room in the compound, there is a massive main room that is almost constantly dappled by the sunlight coming through the windows in the ceiling. One rather large sunbeam was almost perfectly resting upon Tim Yo's golden bust, the light of which was enough to illuminate the entire room. It was only fitting that the room became darker and grimmer after destroying his likeness. In his stead, I mounted four large statues made of blood-soaked shit depicting Jo Bench, Chiyo Nukaga, Wata, and Lori Bravo brutalizing each of their instruments. Along with the near constant caverndeath playing in the background, these unholy metal demigodesses have created a truly foreboding atmosphere for the new *Maximum Heavymetal*. But to make sure that the shitworkers truly got the picture about the new changes, I put up a sign above the entrance to the compound with the lyrics to a great Sarcófago song: "*If you are false don't entry / The nuclear drums will crush your brain / Because you'll be burned and died.*" So long Oi! Farewell pop punk! Hail metal!!!!!!!!!

All jokes aside, I am excited to coordinate *MRR* and will not at all be pushing a heavy metal agenda at the magazine. I hope to follow in the footsteps of Grace, Lydia, and the many other coordinators who have constantly fought the good fight against mainstream, corporate, punk rock bullshit. We will still fight against the homogenization of punk rock, and we hope to continue to share voices and sounds from the DIY scene throughout the world.

I will admit that my acceptance of this position has led to some changes, although all of those changes are on a personal level. Some of these changes were a huge bummer. I had to quit my band Myakka and sell off my share of my record store. And of course, saying goodbye to old friends is always an awful feeling. Despite saying goodbye to so many good things in my life, I was extremely excited to move to San Francisco, and not just for obvious reasons. (Did you know that the weather in Tallahassee was close to 100 degrees when I left? In comparison, the 60 degree weather in the Bay Area is heavenly. I'm sure that all of the people I have met in the Bay are tired of hearing me blab about the weather.) I was excited to move due to the greater amount of queer resources in the San Francisco Bay Area. My personal experience with transitioning in Tallahassee was frustrating, to say the least. But here? Once I get insurance (and a job!) I will have immediate access to so many trans health essentials, including hormones and hair removal. How great is that? I cannot even tell you how excited I am to finally have access to these resources. So, with this move and with the other big changes that have happened in my life, I decided to start anew and gave myself a new name. I'm Joan DeToro, and it is damn nice to meet you.

I do not feel as though I will be able to keep up with coordinating the magazine, focusing on transitioning, and writing a heavy metal column. Even during my moving process, I had a hard time keeping up with many of the DIY metal releases that came out. On a similar note, I would like to apologize to each of the bands that sent in demos in the last several months. I frankly did not have much time to listen to all of them, but I promise that I will pass along your music to the next metal columnist.

This brings me to my last point. Are you interested in extreme metal? Do you know the difference between NSBM and DSBM, and do you know which one of those two to avoid? Please get in touch if you would like to be *MRR's* next metal columnist: mrr@maximumrocknroll.com.

Sick with Greed

I'm going to kick off this month's column with a public service announcement. *Get tested for Hepatitis C.* Most people who have it don't know that they have it. Most people aren't tested for it unless they are of a specific age or if they ask their doctor for the test. It's an extremely common virus and it kills more Americans than any other infectious disease. So go ask your doc for a test. This month I am writing about Hepatitis C and the fucked up health system that allows stigmatized people to die in agony because the healthcare system can't afford to treat people with what has been dubbed "the most inflated drug price in history."

Hepatitis C (HCV) is a virus that causes inflammation of the liver. It can cause cirrhosis, liver cancer, liver failure, and death. The liver is your body's mechanism for filtering the shit out of any and all things that you ingest. Cirrhosis occurs when healthy

COLUMNS

liver cells are killed by disease or substance (alcohol) and are replaced by permanent scar tissue. The scar tissue prevents the liver from being able to heal itself so toxins accrue in your bloodstream and can damage your brain, veins, abdomen, and esophagus. It basically releases poison into your whole body.

HCV is the leading cause of liver cancer and liver transplants, and there is no vaccine for it. Damage to the liver occurs over a long stretch of time, so most people won't have any symptoms for 10 to 15 years after becoming infected. Many people don't even know that they have it before they have already passed it on to others. HCV kills far more people than HIV does, and it is estimated that 75% of people in the US who are living with HCV don't even know they have it. It's often referred to as "The Silent Epidemic." I am not going to get into the reasons behind this in this column, but it should be noted that a large number of people living with HIV are also coinfected with HCV. In some regions of the world this is also the case with Hepatitis B, which is less deadly, but when combined with HCV, it's some real shit.

While most people don't notice any symptoms at all, some people will experience the effects of acute infection for up to six months after they are exposed. Symptoms include joint pain, dark urine, nausea, abdominal pain, jaundice, and fever. Many people will also develop extreme fatigue that will cause them to need to take frequent "Hep siestas." Between 15–20% of people clear it on their own without any outside treatment, but doctors still aren't really sure how or why that works. Of every 100 people infected with the Hepatitis C virus, about 75–85 people will develop chronic Hepatitis C virus infection; of those people, 60–70 people will develop chronic liver disease, 5–20 people will go on to develop cirrhosis over the course of 15–30 years, 1–5 people will die from liver cancer or cirrhosis.

Hepatitis C is *extremely* infective. It is only spread from blood-to-blood contact, so there are fewer bodily fluids it can be transmitted through than HIV, which is spread through semen, breast milk, blood, and "pussy juice" or whichever colloquialism for vaginal fluid applies to your region. Although HCV can only be spread through blood, it is extremely virulent. The HIV viral load in a single drop of blood would usually be in the hundreds or thousands, but the HCV viral load in a single drop of blood would be somewhere in the millions. Because it is such a strong virus, it is incredibly easy to spread through anything that comes in contact with blood. For drug users this means anything that would be used in shared injection supplies—syringes, cottons, cookers, waters, ties, etc. It can even be spread through sniffing / snorting so stuff like straws and dollar bills can carry it. It can be transmitted sexually if there is blood-to-blood contact. Even worse, unlike many viruses, it can survive outside of the body. It can live in traces of dried blood cells on a surface for up to three weeks and in the barrel of syringe for up to 63 days. In rare cases, it can be spread through sharing razors and toothbrushes. It's also easy to spread it through tattoo needles, so if you're getting a stick-and-poke on the dusty floor of a shitty punk house, or your cellmate is helping you to commemorate your stint in the clink, make sure that they are using a brand new, sterilized, sewing or tattoo needle.

There are at least six different genotypes (strains) of HCV and it's possible to contract more than one of them over different periods of your life. Different genotypes are common in different regions of the world and within different communities, and the strain you are diagnosed with may determine your course of treatment. In the United States, the majority of HCV infections are caused by genotype 1, and about 15% are caused by genotype 2, 12% genotype 3. Genotypes 4, 5, and 6 are pretty rare here. Genotype 1 also accounts for most of the infections in Central and South America, Eastern Europe, and has a slim majority over other genotypes in Western Europe. Genotype 2 is most common in West Africa. Genotype 3 is common everywhere but accounts for most infections in Central Asia and parts of the middle East. Genotypes 4 and 5 are mostly in Sub-Saharan Africa, and 6 seems to only exist in China and Southeast Asia. Although genotype 1 is the most common form in the US, genotype 3 is particularly high among people who inject drugs. The newer once-a-day pill medications containing Sofosbuvir are approved for genotypes 1 and 4, and sometimes genotype 3. If you have genotype 2 or 3, you may have to do a more intensive treatment called Viekira Pak which will sometimes include ribavirin treatment and I've heard that really sucks.

Although HCV is endemic in the US, it is predictably lower here than in other regions. Eastern Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean lead with the prevalence of 2.3% and 1.5% respectively. North Africa, Russia, China, and Australia are all also feeling this burden particularly hard. Unsafe health-care procedures and injection drug use are the leading causes of new HCV infections globally.

The most common demographic of HCV is baby boomers. Anyone who received a blood transfusion before 1992 (when they began screening blood for the virus in the US) or injected drugs at any time from '70s until today is at high risk. In the past few years, the increase in popularity of injection drugs all over the world has caused the rate of HCV infection to skyrocket amongst young people. Between 2007 and 2015, the highest rate of probable new HCV infections in Massachusetts was among people in their early twenties for the first time in history. This phenomenon was also mirrored in California and several other states within the same time frame.

The numbers are different everywhere, but most studies show that the overwhelming majority of young people who start injecting drugs today will contract HCV within just six months to one year. That's a ridiculously high rate of new infections. There are five times as many people living with HCV as there are with HIV around the world. I cannot overstate how big this virus is. So why the hell are we hearing almost nothing about it?

Up until the past few years, treating Hepatitis C was an extremely taxing and unpleasant endeavor, similar to treating cancer. Patients were treated with a combination of interferon and ribavirin, and cure rates were only about 50%. Most people I have spoken to who went through this treatment said that if they had the decision to do it over again, they wouldn't have chosen to go through this treatment. The side effects included severe depression, fatigue, insomnia, nausea, diarrhea, and skin rashes. It took many months or years to complete treatment, and many patients opted to stop treatment before its full course due to the unbearable side effects.

Cue Gilead, the California-based pharmaceutical company who had previously cornered the market for HIV with several medications for treatment and prevention. In 2011, Gilead bought a company called Pharmasset who had been developing a drug, Sofosbuvir, to treat HCV. The FDA approved the medication, marketed under the brand name Sovaldi, in 2013. This is the drug that would revolutionize HCV treatment *and* the pharmaceutical industry. In the same year, Gilead was ranked as the number four drug company by Forbes magazine, who called their purchase of Pharmasset "one of the best pharma acquisitions ever."

The Sovaldi regimen consists of taking a pill per day for up to 12 weeks. The cure rates are more than 95% for genotype 1 and are similarly high for many other genotypes. The side effects are much less common, risky, or pronounced compared to the old Ribavirin/ Interferon treatment. Gilead released a subsequent HCV treatment, Harvoni, just one year later. This pill is even more effective and even more expensive. The retail price for a course of treatment is over $90,000, or about $1,000 a pill. Harvoni costs about one dollar per pill to produce. That's a thousand

to one markup, perhaps the highest inflation of any drug price in history. In 2016, Harvoni was ranked the_second most expensive pharmaceutical in the world. Sovaldi also scored in the top ten. Pharmasset, which if you recall, laid all the groundwork for this pill, planned on pricing it at $36,000 per treatment. Gilead's rap sheet gets even worse. The real linchpin here is that the US government *funded* the majority of the initial research for Sofosbuvir. Any taxpayers out there reading this should be livid. Economist Jeffrey Sachs states:

> *Despite Sofosbuvir being discovered, developed, and tested through phase 2 clinical trials mainly with US Government funds, the government-funded scientist and some early investors took the patent rights....In truth, the US Government should own most of the intellectual property on Sofosbuvir, but under U.S. law and practices it is private investors who reap the rewards and taxpayers who bear the burden and the consequences... How did Gilead choose the price? It chose it for one reason: because it could get away with it. Washington allows this kind of abuse to occur, indeed insists upon it. Medicare is obliged—in one of the most absurd policies of our era—to accept whatever price a pharmaceutical company asks for its patent-protected medicines! The result is a level of drug prices that bear no resemblance whatsoever to the costs of production (including the R&D), or to the socially optimal drug pricing that would enable sick people to be cured of their illness.* ("Gilead's Greed that Kills," *Huffington Post*)

Even the US Senate was outraged by this monopoly. In July of 2014, The Senate Finance Committee opened an inquiry and sent an eight-page letter to Gilead demanding the company justify the price. Recent competition on the market has driven the sticker price down on Gilead products, but if we treat everyone who needs to be treated, the drug is still going to bankrupt state medicaid programs and fundamentally change the market for private insurance. A 2014 study showed that even if only half of the estimated population living with HCV in California were prescribed Sovaldi, it would raise the state's drug expenditures by twenty-two billion dollars in a single year. It would cost even more with Harvoni, which is the current standard of care.

I had a friend who went to a talk given by one of the Chief Officers at Gilead. She said that he talked for an hour about their moral obligation to cure diseases and how great they are doing at giving back to the community. During the Q&A period she asked, "If your company is so invested in social justice, how do you justify charging such an exorbitant amount for life-saving Hepatitis C treatment?" He basically responded that they *need* to charge that much so that the profit can go back into funding R&D to find cures for other "rare diseases." Rare diseases? Not only do pharmaceutical companies already markup prices to more than account for research costs, HCV is one of the most common diseases on the planet. And either way, Gilead didn't fund any of the original research for this treatment.

Due to the high cost of the Sofosbuvir, insurers have created absurd criteria that patients must meet in order to get treatment. Up until last year, many private insurance companies required a six month period of sobriety and evidence of the most extreme liver damage (a score of F3 or F4 on the fibrosis scale) in order to qualify for treatment. Many insurers still have these rules in place. These stipulations are completely medically arbitrary. Again, Jeffrey Sachs:

> *Given the monopoly price, tens of thousands of Americans and millions of people around the world infected with Hepatitis C are being told by their doctors, their health insurers, or Medicaid, that they don't "yet" qualify for Sofosbuvir because they are not yet sick enough. Their livers are not yet scarred enough. They are not yet dead enough. They should come back when they are nearly dead, if it's not too late.*

Insurance companies did the same thing when expensive anti-retroviral therapies came out to treat HIV, which were also mostly produced by Gilead. People who use drugs were excluded from life-saving treatment on the grounds that "they wouldn't be able to adhere to treatment." Since then, studies have shown that drug users are actually better at adhering to daily treatment plans than the general population. Turns out that it's actually pretty easy for people who organize their lives around their need to dose at specific times of the day to readily add another pill to that regimen. Go figure.

From a public health perspective, the people who are still actively injecting drugs are the exact population you would want to educate and cure *before* they have the chance to spread the infection to others. The Massachusetts Attorney General threatened to bring a suit against Gilead and successfully ended rationing on the grounds of treatment cost. The ACLU filed a class action suit in Indiana to repeal similar stipulations. Washington, Delaware, Connecticut, Florida, and New York and a handful of other states have also banned their medicaid programs from rationing HCV treatment.

The sole reason that Gilead can price gouge at such an astronomical level is because the people who are getting HCV are injection drug users. This population has already endured so much shame and discrimination that they usually avoid doctors and ERs at all costs. It's also a population that physicians and insurers feel comfortable turning away, telling people that they are not deserving of life-saving treatment. Drug users can't even advocate for themselves because that would first require an admission of drug use, which immediately discredits anything they have to say.

This is stigma, institutionalized. This kind of medication rationing is not seen with any other disease, syndrome, disorder, or with any other drug in existence. The market for this drug is buttressed, rather unsteadily, by the unjustified moral superiority that the general population wields over drug users. Despite the media and political rhetoric about addiction being a disease, drug use is still seen as a personality defect, and a rather unsavory one at that. Not even alcohol dependence is proscribed to this standard any more. Gilead has become a living caricature of corporate greed. The one hope I cling to is that they continue to swell until the private healthcare system bursts, bringing the whole system tumbling down on top of them.

Until then, take care of yourselves.

Motherfucker. Motherfuckers, plural. I am overladen with superlatives, my adjectives are in disarray. I have no words, and I must praise. LEBENDEN TOTEN's *Mind Parasites* is taking yet another spin on this turntable and I still can't manage to squeeze my brains into a configuration that can produce words that even begin to do this record justice. After a long recording hiatus, broken only by the appearance of "At the Window" on 2014's *Whispers Through the Black Veil* compilation, the ultra-limited *Stagnation Fragmentation* cassette (which presented early versions of these tracks), and the just-released *Static!*

12" single, LEBENDEN TOTEN have finally released their first proper LP in nearly a decade.

Without hyperbole, 100% naked truth, this is a fucking masterpiece. Influences range from early Kyushu noisecore (CONFUSE, NO CUT circa *Tragic A Present*, and especially mid-tempo *Damnation*-era GAI) to GLOOM-style crasher crust to HAWKWIND-style space rock, all blended and distilled into a unique and incredibly vital new sound. "At the Window," with its focused, hard-edged sound was the first glimpse of the new direction LEBENDEN TOTEN were taking, measured and esoteric, seemingly influenced by mid '80s hardcore experimenters MOBS as much as it was by their usual noisecore heroes. *Static!* was the manifesto, a sleek and intriguing synth-touched exploration of raw punk in long form, laden with disorienting noise before compressing into a more traditional kind of hardcore attack. *Mind Parasites* is the final (for now) form, meticulously well-written, comfortable, and challenging at once, always supremely confident and impeccably played.

As always, the iron spine of LEBENDEN TOTEN is the rhythm section, with Mira's driving bass lines carrying the melodic load, cleaving to the Kyushu style without borrowing a lick or riff, always catchy and never faltering. Keith's drumming is exactly what it should be, sublimely underplayed and incredibly technical (check out the rumbling toms of "There is Nothing in this Place"), content to offer up a 1-2 pattern everywhere one should be while sneaking in complicated fills that wouldn't even occur to a lesser drummer. Keith's guitar is in the back of the mix, frequently providing more atmosphere than musical drive, laden in effects right up to the moment that he dives in with a frantic and devastating lead. Chanel's vocals star in the band like never before, from the double-tracked chants of "Mind Parasites," to the honest-to-god singing (singing!). This is just fuckin' incredible, traditional and genre-subverting by turns, and it can honestly be said that Japan's STAGNATION are the only other band that are in the same league as LEBENDEN TOTEN at the moment when it comes to pushing and stretching the boundaries of noise punk. I am fanboy enough that I had a copy shipped to me from Europe when the band was on tour there, but it should be readily available in the US by the time this issue comes out. It's self-released (punk as fuck), so keep an eye on your favorite distro. If you read this column, you need this fucking thing.

As the aforementioned bands are to noise punk, so are the THISCLOSE crew to D-beat, and the world is lucky enough to have been graced with the second volume of *The New Wave of the Grave New Beat* compilation series. Volume one was loaded with obscurity, consisting mainly of one-off and project bands dedicated to reinventing D-beat in a cornucopia of genres, with everything from stripped-down DISASTER-style minimalism to Celtic crust to full-on ambient electro represented. This time around, there are many more ringers in the mix. Singapore's LIFELOCK, the UK's ENDLESS GRINNING SKULLS, Sweden's PARANOID and PRICE OF SILENCE, and Japan's LIFE and SLUDGE offer up one or two tracks apiece alongside Our Future house bands THISCLOSE and RODNEY SHADES BAND and a handful of more obscure / newer bands. Highlights include the complete noise attack of FINAL FUKKER, who wield not just feedback but pure static as musical weapons; the furious GAZE who sound like HEALTH HAZARD gone D-beat; LIFELOCK's incredibly powerful charging D-beat / crasher attack (highlighted by blazing solos); and BOMBARDMENT's passionate, well-crafted "Voracious Vultures." Of course THISCLOSE and RODNEY SHADES BAND put their best feet forward as well, especially the NWOBHM-meets-late DISCHARGE theatrics of the RODNEY SHADES BAND. This is fantastic new entry in the series, lacking some of the stylistic diversity of the first volume but more than compensating with the star-studded lineup. It's cheap, it's great, check it out at ourfuturerecords.bandcamp.com and pick up a copy!

Japan's WEAKS emerged from the ashes of the late and lamented crasher crust heroes LASTLY, though you'd never know it by the band's sound alone. The execution may be different, but the tight, driving style definitely ties this band to their past endeavors. WEAKS's debut CDEP was good but not incredibly distinctive—mostly mid-tempo, POISON IDEA-influenced, hardcore. The new *Flamenco* EP showcases a much more confident and unique band, joining super-charismatic vocals in the traditional Japanese hardcore style (Are the "r" sounds rolled? You bet they fuckin' are!) to catchy guitar riffs and interesting, non-traditional song structures. The dead stop to drum break to full-band crushing breakdown in "璃覃膃鏃劃枸袈宁趍玃壟鏃" isn't influenced by anything you'd find on a DEATH SIDE or NIGHTMARE record, that's for sure. WEAKS deserve a lot of credit for their clever approach, and just as much for their killer performance. The drumming here is top-notch and way up in the front of the mix (as it deserves to be, though it does bury the bass a bit by comparison) and the vocals and guitar playing are strong and passionate. Everyone involved played their hearts out and infused even the mid-tempo parts with a palpable sense of urgency. Strong Mind Japan is a young(-ish) label but pretty much every release so far has been sterling and this is no exception.

Gang, something has been missing from our lives. It's been months since I've had a chance to hear new TOM & BOOT BOYS music, and I feel like my brain cells have been recovering as a result. I'm thinkin' too much and having too little fun. Well, fuck that shit! We've got two new shits from the T&BB crew this month, so let's get stupid! First up is the fantastic gig-only cassingle for "Fuck Them All Shits Again." With sights firmly set on fake punx, this two-minute ripper gives those who exploit punk for fashion the what for, showering them will well-deserved derision and a fucking fantastic cowbell-driven breakdown. Hell, Nori and crew are positively pissed! Fuck all them shits.

Now check it out: according to TOM AND BOOTS BOYS's EP titles, punks were "alright" in '96 and "fucked up" in '97. Now in '17 "ripped off" is the T&BB assessment of the state of the culture. *Punks Are Ripped Off* again showcases a bit of a harder-edged side of the band; check out the song titles from the A-side: "Shit Shit Shit You Are Shit," "I'm So Pissed," and "Time to Fuck Off One More Time!" Fuck, I feel like I need to send Nori a fruit basket or something, he's really upset! Fortunately, the B-side is much more lighthearted and fun-loving, like the BOYS we're used to. As a new TOM AND BOOT BOYS EP, this is interesting, as the other members of the band get quite a few more opportunities to show off than they usually do. Miyoshi's bass is right up front in the mix, and he makes the most of it, showing off some slick playing and nimble basslines. Taka-44 held on to that cowbell and it appears all over this record, accenting his always controlled and on-point playing. Fuck man, this band is so dumb and straightforward and yet so subtle and effective at what they do. Taking yourself, or the world around you, or punk itself too seriously can sometimes be an overwhelming burden. I think every punk needs at least one TOM & BOOT BOYS record to put on once in awhile to remind them that, aside from everything else, this shit is supposed to be fun.

That being said, fun can be serious, and that's where *Private Scandal* zine comes into play. Head honcho Gimmick is a high-level historian of noise punk, particularly of the Kyushu variety. *MRR* just received issues two and three (issue one was originally only available in Japanese, but its central interview will be reprinted in the upcoming new issue of *More Noize*). Besides publishing the magazine, Gimmick has done yeoman's work in putting together the "Private Scandal Party" live gigs,

which have featured some of the best bands, old and new, in the noize punk sphere. The second issue shines the spotlight on new band the TITS (ex-RECONSIDERATION) with an interview and a long and detailed feature on late '80s / early '90s Kyushu punk stalwarts SLICKS. It also features well-written gig and record reviews of bands in this sphere and some killer photography. Issue three (a veritable novel compared to the slim isssue number two) is a Chiba city special, with two lengthy band histories / interviews with the C+C and the MARGARETS, supplemented with plenty of photos and flyers / ads. The final section is an exhaustive overview of all the significant Chiba punk bands from the '80s to the '00s, including bands like SCREAMING NOISE, BIG JET MOUSE, and HOWLING GUITAR. Across both issues, the writing is extremely high quality, the interview questions are very well-researched and interesting, and the mastery of the material is unquestionable. Gimmick is a *bona fide* expert in the field of noize punk and its history, and both of these zines are essential reading for fans and dabblers in the style. There's no website to visit, write gimmickrottenidol@gmail.com to find out how to get your own copies. Top shelf shit, but be forewarned: reading these will cause immense growth to your wantlists!

That's it for the noise beat this month, let's get together for more beer and pogo, shall we? Email to agunderwood@gmail.com or write c/o *MRR*.

SEX WORK IS REAL WORK

Queenie Bon Bon is a current sex worker, political comedic writer and sexological body worker who has worked in strip clubs, massage parlors and brothels in Australia and the UK, and is a member of Debbie Doesn't Do It For Free, the Australian sex worker art collective. This is part one of three.

When this story starts, I am in New York City with a friend. At one point we were on holiday together, now we don't say anything to each other. We both understand that we are having a together-alone holiday. We stay in an Airbnb in Bed-Stuy where we plan to work from so we can buy nice things. The apartment is too far from Manhattan, where the money is, although we can see it from our roof. I look out and think: "Someone is giving a $300 blowjob right now. I wish it were me." His ads are dynamic and charming, he is prepared with photos. He is a muscle boy with hungry holes. He is going to fill his holes, and then buy nice things. I start to write my ad: "Let's have a nice time." I take a photo in the bathroom, and then decide that I'm too sick and depressed to work. I don't even put my ad up, and instead spend my days looking at the nice things I would have bought if I were not too depressed and a bit more careerist.

For weeks we are in the deep heat. I got to see a contemporary dance piece, enjoying their air con and crying silently in the interval because I miss work at the strippers. It keeps getting hotter. My friend takes lovers and stays in their air-conditioned homes and I buy a travel massager for $59 and jerk off with the fan on full while worrying about the environment. I'm reading a book called *Artificial Hells* that has been left out in the apartment by the owner. I feel like someone I'm not, sitting on the sofa in an airy bedsit, reading some critical theory. It's a book I would never have bought, but in this fantasy...I could *be* her. The only other belongings she has in the apartment are a weed grinder, a nude photo, a protein bar, and a bottle of hydrogen peroxide. I feel like a detective. In my head I start to write a hooker detective movie called *She Hoes She Knows*. Tagline: The mystery with a happy ending.

This is an easy movie to write because pretty much all hos *are* detectives! We always have to work things out and we are so good at navigating new situations, understanding what is being said during sub-textual negotiations. Also, hookers get told secrets all the time, which is good for solving mysteries.

I eat the protein bar as brain food while planning my movie and use the weed grinder to fine grind my weed to help me get into a creative mind space. I turn the naked photo over though because that's private. She is definitely a hooker. It's obvious to a detective like me. A protein bar and hydrogen peroxide. We don't need any more clues. I bet she's at a job right now. She's doing two jobs at once, being a landlord and a hooker. I just think, "That's so New York."

I join sexyjobs.com, an adult recruitment site for adult jobs, and am offered $50 for a blowjob and great spam email opportunities to become a cam girl. I don't get a sexy job. Instead, I go to the clothing exchange and casually accidentally menstruate on the floor of the changing room. I wipe it up with my jean jacket and now there is a smear on the floor. It looks nice, like marbling. I love to craft.

I don't buy the items I tried, even though one of them has my blood on it. And I have blood on my leg, which links me to the crime. I leave and eat a roast beef sandwich. I send a message to a boy I met ten years earlier when our bands played a show together, asking if he can get me some dexies. He can't, he says no one can. I say we should hang out so that it doesn't seem like I'm just contacting him about drugs. He replies asking if I want to buy Xanax instead. He doesn't care that I'm just messaging about drugs. I chew on Klonopin and we don't talk again.

I go for a long walk. I'm sweating. I discover that the toilet in our bathroom is blocked. I flush it multiple times and shit overflows onto the nice white floor of the apartment that I keep pretending is mine. This could be my real life, just dealing with problems on my own, being independent in my bedsit. Suddenly the toilet gets blocked and I read a tutorial on how to fix it. The number one thing it says is "don't flush." It tells me this could make it flood but I am already past that stage. It says I need gloves and wire. I put a plastic coat hanger in the S bend. I have gloves for work which I'm not using because I can't go to work because I have these busy home things here and I'm depressed. The water went above the glove and my arm was deep in liquid fecal matter. I've touched quite a lot of poo at work, I mean a lot like, not *a lot* a lot, but a good amount, so I'm not freaked out by it. This is a transferable skill I have from the office. We often don't get to acknowledge these things.

I fix the toilet and feel very capable. I want to text someone to tell them that I did a plumbing activity. My first one. I don't know who to tell, except Mother, but I have hardly spoken to her for two months, so I'd have to tell her more about my trip than just "Mumma, I unblocked a toilet on my own." I feel bad that I haven't talked to her. I told her it was because I'm very busy, but it is actually because I have been very un-busy being an unemployed hooker and walking around by myself. I don't want her to worry, she worries that I'm sad and that I isolate myself, so I don't like to give her information on the matter. It would be nice to tell her about the plumbing, though. I take a photo of the toilet after I clean it, but then I realize it's just a photo of a clean toilet. I don't tell anyone of my success with the plumbing. I feel weirdly euphoric. Maybe the trip hasn't been that bad? I can do this alone. I can be alone. The blocked toilet was a gift.

A gal pal joins me for the last bit of time in NYC. We open Bed-Stuy's quietest brothel. We become the two detectives from *She Hoes She Knows* (the mystery show with a happy ending). We don't have any cases yet, but fully we are on the case, getting past first base, we are *live live live*! Your mystery solved or no money back! No red herrings and no blue balls get past us! ESP for GFE. Right now! Bed-Stuy's only hooker detective agency.

Then backpage.com gets taken down. Or rather, Visa and MasterCard announce they will no longer let you pay for your adverts on the adult services section of the site because they say that it is damaging to their brand. Now I can't work because, apart from spending most of my time pretending to be a detective and being depressed and lying face down, Visa and MasterCard are stopping me. I get constant updates on what everyone from the global hooker villages are saying on this crisis and I feel like I'm the MC at this world wide web conference. I keep saying "It's a bad time for our people," even though everyone knows I'm the person least affected by this. Criminalization affects us all, but it is those closest to the edge that are burned by the fire first.

When we leave I give the Airbnb a very nice review, even though the air conditioner didn't work, largely because I feel a bit guilty that I opened a brothel in her apartment and I know some people have strong feelings about that. I replace her protein bar with two new ones in superior flavors, but she doesn't acknowledge this and leaves me a bad review saying that I had extra guests and smoked inside. It was all truth.

And now, I, a newly blacklisted Airbnb user, am back in London, where I can stay with Mother, as she cares not for reviews or ratings. I believe she would rather not think about me opening Bed-Stuy's quietest brothel.

While I'm there, Amnesty International goes to a vote on the policy of the decriminalization of sex work. This was opposed by a group of radfems, religious organizations, and some random celebrities, who believe they have better insight into this than a human rights organization and the global sex worker movement. Lena Dunham was one of these celebrities. I don't know why she stood out so much to me as such a betrayer. I watched two seasons of *Girls* waiting to get it, and I didn't get it. Like, I had wanted to believe in her, and now she was doing this awful thing. No, I didn't like her TV show, but not everything is for everyone. Not everyone likes my shows either. Indeed, those who do not are free to write something on Punter Planet to go with the review of me on there that describes my services as "un-therapeutic" and also complained that I smelled like an anzac biscuit. I mean, really. If you have ever been to a parlor there are so many things you could leave smelling of, but an anzac biscuit, which is made of coconut and sugar, is delightful, compared to say Glade air freshener or a synthetic massage gel. These are very unpleasing smells.

Lena is also unpleasing. I refer to her as Lena *Judas* Dunham when talking about her to mother, who has no idea who she is. I was raised as a Quaker, and my mother is in her 70s, so this reference is both culturally and socially obtuse.

Lena tweets "I recognize that I'm not a sex worker or a trafficking survivor. But I'm blessed to have a platform that many close to this issue do not." Yes, but we are not blessed that this is how you choose to use your platform. Privileged people get upset about equality movements because it is the first time they don't get to have the loudest voice, so they make a fuss and try to be the loudest again.

We cannot debate whether the sex industry should or shouldn't exist because it does exist. It is impossible to imagine a world under capitalism in which people won't use every resource they have to survive. For many, surviving means trading sex for things they need. And for many, trading sex is just going to work. So, Hollywood, if you want to talk worker rights, let's start by talking about how to end sexism, transphobia, and misogyny, not the sex industry. Otherwise it becomes obvious that what you are doing is just saying words that make you feel nice in your weird, disconnected way. If you're not talking about those things then you're talking about the theoretical notion of a sex worker's existence instead of the full actuality of our lives.

On August 6, Amnesty International announced they were backing decriminalization and I cried. I was wearing a new waterproof eyeliner, by discount brand Barry M, and it worked really well. 9/10.

Mother suggests I might feel nice if I got dressed. I tell her, "You know, Mother, they say dress for the job you want, and I'm an arts graduate and unemployed prostitute." My days are spent in bed reading all the press surrounding Amnesty's decision. My other activity is watching hours and hours of industrial and darkwave music videos.

As we head into week three in bed, I feel that I maybe I'm not doing 100%. I think of the goddesses who have worked through times when they really had to battle against their mind and body. Britney Spears says in her breakthrough 1998 hit "Baby One More Time" that her loneliness is killing her and then two years later in her slightly less acclaimed hit "Stronger" she says how her loneliness ain't killing her no more. So, I get dressed for best practice. Right now, best practice would be an unwavering assertion that everyone has the right to do whatever they like with their bodies, such as having any sex they desire or consent to, including sex that involves the exchange of money.

I miss working and I can't be in my detective agency movie if I'm not even engaging enough in the world to see any mysteries! I love being part of this mystery coven life that totally powers me up. Our futures are created by our former selves. Everything that happens next happened before I was face down in my teenage bedroom in London. But that's okay! We don't need to live in linear narratives....

I don't think anyone should take advice, but there are probably a lot of things for the punks to talk about, and we might as well do it here. Think of it more as an OPINION column though (...and if we need a tagline for that I hope it can be something as vague as: "A column for people who are intrigued by subtle differences between the 'punks' and the 'punx.'")

Dear Mr. R,
A member of our punk scene was recently outed as being an abuser. I had knowledge of one incident of their abuse, an event that occurred against a friend of mine some years ago. When that friend told me about the abuse, I responded strongly and with outrage, but this person didn't want to take action or address it publicly. As an onlooker to abuse in a scene where the abuser holds serious social capital, how should we proceed in these events? What is the respectful and supportive thing to do for both the friend and the community?

These questions are always the hardest ones to answer since there isn't anything *definitive* to do in every single case contrary to what posts "outing" social media commenters would have you believe. You know, such as all of those comments in the vein of "if she was really abused, she would've / needs to call the police," and other such garbage suggestions. But it is true that hindsight makes us think that we had the opportunity to do a *specific* correct thing that would've created a better outcome. Dealing with trauma and power and perception is fucked up and complicated. Different people who are victims of abuse will have different needs when working through all of the shit they are going through while they try to begin to feel whole again. Just deciding to spread the word about their experience publicly could take away all of their power in dealing with a fucked up situation that has already made them feel vulnerable and out of

control.

Since your friend didn't want to be open about the incident, I'm glad they still felt as though they were able to talk to you, and trust you, with / about those details, so that they weren't stuck having to deal with all of those feelings totally alone. One of the ways we can always try to help is by doing our best to create a culture where we listen and believe the people who tell us about their experiences—even when they're naming the names of people who are "nice guys" that have always been "cool to us," and have tons of social capital on their side.

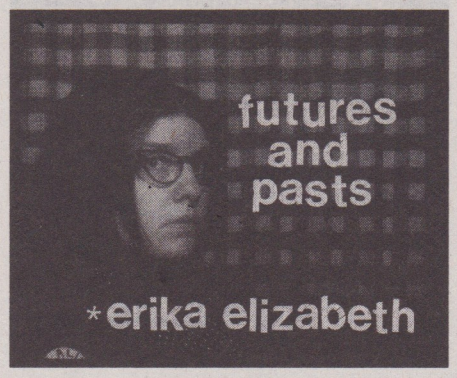
Being nice and well-known does not make a person incapable of doing harm, but it sure seems to keep people quiet and disbelieving when the word about their harm is starting to spread. I guess for these people that there's probably a mixture of general blowback and ostracization fears, but there's also a fair amount of gaslighting that happens in these instances when everyone has decided a person is beyond reproach. It's certainly way easier for people to give themselves the "Nobody else seems to think this person is a creep, so this information has got to be false" out, or the "if this story was really true, then I'm sure XX wouldn't be friends with them so it's probably fine to ignore the rumors" way out than it is to be the discordant voice at the party, right?

For a person in a situation like yours, where you were given the opportunity to have heard from a friend directly, one option you have is asking them if they would feel comfortable with you sharing their story with other people while maintaining their confidence: whether they would like their name left out of it, if there are private details to avoid, etc. This stuff is always hard to negotiate, but one of the ways serial predators seem to find their behavior finally being spotlit is when we start sharing even vague information with each other, which then ends up being retold and corroborated in a chorus of louder and strengthening voices that are harder and harder to shut out. Of course, ideally it shouldn't have to reach this boiling point in order to feel real to the punk powers that be, so please, we've got to remember to back up our friends when they speak, especially when they're speaking on unpopular subjects, and popular people. It's not easy to do what they're doing.

Dear Mr. R,
What is worse for you, coke or molly?

All I can tell you is that this is probably a personal choice that depends largely on what you have to do tomorrow, so definitely make the choice wisely, but if you're in the market for way more real ass information pertaining to what I'm assuming is a *very* serious choice, please feel free to consult my fellow advice oracle buddy, the internet. She lives for these kind of questions!

This column was written in a van on the way to the last show of tour. I'm feeling like either a severe punk multi-tasker, or a last minute Larry. This would have been a great time to send in your questions cause I had nothing but time for advice giving, so too bad you won't find that out until long after I've returned home. Got a question? Send a regular assed email to: ASKMRR@MAIL.COM, or just text a question to 510-585-HELP! You can even just call that number and leave a message question if that's your thing. If you are sending a question that is time sensitive, let me know so that I can get you a timely response!



There's this really perfect moment in the 1987 documentary *Athens, GA: Inside / Out* where PYLON's bassist Michael Lachowski is talking about how all of the members of the band were involved with making visual art when they first got together, and that the biggest priority when starting PYLON was "to make more art, and it was just going to be using instruments." Post-punk is one of those imprecise concepts that has simultaneously come to mean almost anything and nothing, but whenever I'm trying to articulate exactly how and why the shift from punk to post-punk came about, Michael Lachowski's Southern-drawled comment about making art with instruments plays out in my head every single time.

COME ON were a late '70s downtown New York City quintet who released a two-song 7" ("Don't Walk on the Kitchen Floor / Kitchen in the Clouds") in 1978 that basically set the archetype of jittery and tightly-wound post-punk that art-schooled oddballs across the United States would be following well into the 1980s. If COME ON songs were art made with instruments, the visual equivalent would be something like Andy Warhol's *Brillo Boxes*: minimalist, sharp-angled reflections of the banal minutiae of modern living. A CD-only COME ON anthology has been floating around since the late '90s, collecting the one official single, a two-song 7" from 1980 that the band apparently wasn't aware had ever been released until it popped up on eBay, and about a dozen otherwise unreleased tracks that had been recorded live at CBGB in 1978 and the Hurrah in 1980. Now, the entire collection is available on vinyl for the first time ever, as part of Manufactured Recordings's archival reissue series. The combination of Jamie Kaufman's buttoned-up, nervously yelped vocals, the intertwining guitar scribble and scratch from George Elliott and Elena Glasberg (the latter was still a high school student when she was recruited into COME ON!), and Ralf Mann's stutteringly danceable, downtown funk basslines invited more than a few comparisons to the earliest incarnation of art-schooled oddballs-turned-major label new wave paragons TALKING HEADS, which is to say before David Byrne got the giant suit and developed the Afrobeat obsession. And, in true *More Songs About Buildings and Food* style, Kaufman's lyrics fixated on the mundane and the everyday, chronicling such topics as station wagon-driving housewives playing tennis, banging on the ceiling with a broom when a neighbor's stereo is too loud at night, being snubbed by Mickey Mouse at Disneyland, and the complexities of the child / parent relationship. Imagine Jonathan Richman's narratives of (sub)urban naivety, if the MODERN LOVERS had formed in the post-(not proto-)punk era, drawn their primary inspiration from TELEVISION rather than the VELVET UNDERGROUND, and existed on the cusp of No Wave's New York campaign of dissonance and anti-rock reductionism. One of the greatest, most essential, American weirdo art-punk bands ever, no hyperbole. (Manufactured Recordings, comeonnyc.bandcamp.com)

I've been feeling less than enthusiastic about a lot of new music over the last few months, but one notable exception is the small crop of contemporary English bands who fit perfectly into the lineage of stripped-down yet incendiary post-punk that was originally born from the post-industrial urban decay and cultural depression of late '70s / early '80s Britain. The debut EP from Brighton's STRUCTURE could just as easily been sourced from a Rock Against Racism set in 1979 as the Bandcamp page where I found them in 2017—think monochrome music for grey skies, brutalist concrete housing towers, and dimly lit subway stations, perfectly reflected in stark, repetitive rhythms, trebly stabs of guitar, and vocals delivered in caustic-tongued deadpan critiquing our society of the spectacle. The shadow of bands like CRISIS, the EX (at least their pre-'90s incarnation), and

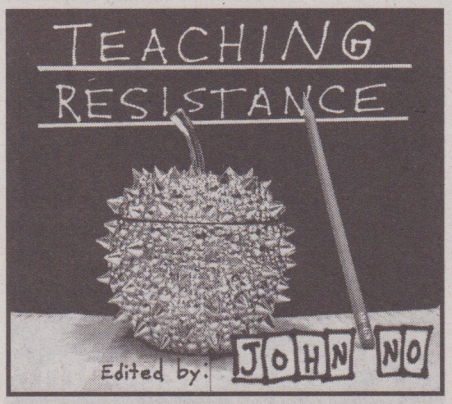
COLUMNS

LACK OF KNOWLEDGE definitely looms over these three songs, as STRUCTURE manage to successfully skirt the wobbly line between post-punk and anarcho-punk while avoiding the overly conceptual art for art's sake tendencies of the former and the hollow, stencil font sloganeering of the latter. "Disco" lays out their musical and ideological allegiances pretty clearly, starting as a dark and foreboding bass-driven slowburner and gradually building into a frantic rush of slashing guitar and skittering drums, as the resignation of capitalist workaday drudgery (*"I settled into the quiet life / I settled down in a good job"* etc.) gives way to shouts of desperate escapist fantasy (*"I wanna go to the disco / I want to get out of my head"*). Pair this one with SARCASM's recent and very similarly-minded *Malarial Bog* EP on Static Shock for some serious double UK trouble. (structurestructure.bandcamp.com)

It's also been helpful to be reminded that even in the fog of online media oversaturation and social network hype, it's still possible to stumble on exciting, life-affirming, music occupying the darkest corners of the vast digital void. Aimless Bandcamp *dérive* has sort of become the modern analogue for my pre-teen / pre-internet channels of chance musical discovery (like off-hand references in zines or half-remembered songs played late-night college radio programs), but when a band can post a demo online and almost instantly have it reblogged hundreds of times over, chancing upon something genuinely out-of-nowhere and off-the-radar still warms my cold, 21st century heart. As far as I can tell, Los Angeles post-punk trio MOVING MAPS have been around since at least 2015 and their first release, a self-released six-song EP called *Eyes to Meet*, quietly appeared this summer. Molly, Sonia, and Gillian take turns rotating between instruments, with all three layering their voices together into slightly askew sung-spoken harmonies over the sort of snaking bass lines, choppy beats, and brittle guitar chime spiritually descended from the rhythmic minimalism of OH-OK (who were making their own art with instruments alongside PYLON in early '80s Athens), or in a much more contemporary context, the knotted, melodic post-punk of GRASS WIDOW or HOUSEHOLD. The kinetic rhythms in "Wild Card" and "March" push the music forward with a calculated precision, just as the terse, clean guitar lines, and briskly overlapping vocals gently pull them back, creating the sort of subtle tension that haunts you long after the songs end. Smart, effortlessly cool, post-punk women do it yet again! (movingmaps.bandcamp.com)

A short-but-sweet recent find worth mentioning: the two-song, digital-only EP from Carrboro, North Carolina's FITNESS WOMXN, whose needling, single-note, guitar lines, disco-not-disco beats, and taut bass throb have all been ripped straight from the pages of the holy book of serrated femme-punk. "Erosion" is a frenzied MERCENÁRIAS-inspired hopscotch that tumbles from off-kilter, call-and-response vocals to an ecstatic group harmony of wordless *"ahhhhs,"* leading into to the skeletal and vitriolic GOOD THROB / FRAU-like punk clatter of "Living Hell" and culminating in a bratty sneer of *"my best advice to you is repent / or get bent."* Straight fire. (fitnesswomxn.bandcamp.com)

Say hey at ripitupstartagain@gmail.com, more sights and sounds: futuresandpasts.org



Idealistic, radical-minded teachers have always struggled to find ways to reconcile the strictures and limitations of institutional school environments (primary, secondary, and higher education) with the ideals they are trying to put into practice. Things get even more challenging when one's cultural and intellectual base for such ideals is grounded in a complex, ideologically-varied, and sometimes politically reactionary (in contrast to radical) subculture like punk. This month's Teaching Resistance is from Michael Utley, who has dedicated the last several years doing PhD research into what, if anything, an explicitly punk pedagogy would look like.

Re-Writing the Rebellion: Challenges of Pursuing a Punk Rock PhD

"The great thing about punk is that no matter what anyone writes about it, they're wrong." – Unknown origin

To begin, I need to explain that I am a non-traditional graduate student (PhD candidate in Rhetorics, Communication, and Information Design at Clemson University). I decided to go back to school at thirty-seven years old to pursue a graduate degree after more than a decade of a roller-coaster career in the NYC business world where I "sold out" (literally—I was a salesman) and earned six figures a year in my early thirties, only to self-destruct and party away my ill-gotten gains over an eighteen-month hiatus from reality where the concept of self-control no longer existed in my mind.

I bought the ticket and took the ride and when it was all over, I was left with nothing but the one constant that had never abandoned me: my punk rock spirit. I thought I had left *it* behind somewhere along the way, but it turned out that I had only tuned it out; changed the station. When I tuned back in, I discovered the music had kept right on playing without me. It welcomed me back and we picked back up where we had left off.

My plan was simple: I had discovered Clemson University in upstate South Carolina and their Master of Arts in Professional Communication program. I would move down there for two years, crank out my MA and then make a triumphant return to NYC where I would successfully change careers and go about my business of making the world a better place by fucking around with the powers that be and being an overall pain in the ass to corporate and authoritarian types (which has always been my dream).

However, through that process, I discovered the world of academia can be a pretty kick-ass place for an aging punk to be. It supported and encouraged me to make punk rock the primary focus of my research (I was pushed to focus on something I was passionate about and punk certainly qualified). Teaching several sections of English 103 (Accelerated Composition) was also a program requirement and as I took on a new role as a graduate student educator, I began to realize that punk rock could be a valuable tool in teaching students how to engage with and learn critical thinking skills and how to transfer those skills and ideas onto the written page (or screen, or audio file). It was incredibly exciting.

My MA thesis was titled *Hardcore Rhetoric: Towards a Punk Rock Pedagogy* and it was a starting point for my development of pedagogical strategies that embraced the best of punk: the DIY ethos, suspicion / questioning of authority, youthful idealism and rebellion, individuality and nonconformity, and the rejection of the pursuit of perfection (embracing instead the rawness and flaws of rank amateurism as defining assets). The manuscript itself became performative and representative of these ideals in its own clumsy and naïve ways (to the point that my committee passed me by the skin of my teeth; and even then they only did so because they had all already recommended me to the PhD

program—my need to resist authority in any of its forms was beginning to show again). But I see now that we had all missed the point.

The rigid structure and demands for rigorous scholarship frequently come to blows with punk rock's "fuck you" attitude and resistance to external control. In the beginning, higher education seemed to me to be a utopia where I was free to explore and play with punk on rhetorical, philosophical, and ideological grounds; teasing out the tensions and listening for the wonderful chaos that drew me to punk to begin with. But slowly, as my ideas and my methods of thinking about punk rock have evolved, the tensions between its rebellious spirit and the institutional requirements of earning a PhD began to cause more serious issues.

While the world outside of academia looks at a Masters degree as a significant accomplishment (and it is), inside the walls of graduate school an MA or MS is pure bush league; a joke. If you are not a PhD, you barely qualify as a human. I barely squeaked by with my MA and I moved on to the next level where it was assumed I would address the deficiencies of my earlier work. It is not until now, writing this article, that I am beginning to understand that what I wrote back then, while flawed, might be relevant to how I need to be thinking about continuing with my research now.

My doctoral dissertation began as an extension of my MA thesis where I had planned to delve into far more detail and flesh out just what a "punk rock pedagogy" might look like in practice in the classroom. And that is where it all started to come undone. The problem resided in what I came to recognize as an idealistic desire to somehow rejuvenate and rehabilitate punk rock in a way that finally claimed the cultural significance it had long been denied. I thought that I could contribute to a reshaping of the world by introducing a new generation of potential punk rock revolutionaries to the subversive cultural movement that shaped me. I think I now begin to see the highly problematic direction this was going.

I simply wanted to usurp the power of the modern American institution of higher education and replace its problematic agenda with an equally problematic agenda of my own (grounded in a kind of punk rock intellectualism). Of course, to believe that I could do so is grandiose at best and ludicrous at worst but I do still believe that you need to start somewhere. It is just that I was starting out from a series of flawed assumptions that doomed my work from the outset.

As my project moved forward through the prospectus stage (basically a proposal that demonstrated my ability to organize and present punk rock in an appropriately rigorous and complex manner to warrant the awarding of a PhD) and then through the qualifying exam phase (a series of extremely difficult written and oral examinations you need to pass before being permitted to begin focusing solely on your research—I failed them the first time but passed on the second try), the flaws in my thinking were exposed.

My initial reaction was to blame and vilify my committee members (a four person committee responsible for guiding / evaluating my work to ensure it met the minimum requirements for earning the degree) for failing to acknowledge and understand the level of knowledge that thirty-five years of experience had granted me. I fought them every step of the way and resisted / rejected their authority over me on the simple grounds that they *were* an authority over me. While I set out to expose and educate others on the very best of punk rock, I was simultaneously demonstrating the worst.

I believe that punk rock *can* and *should* be an effective tool in teaching today's students how to critically navigate the incredibly dense and rich digital cultural environment that they occupy. However, my fatal error was in idealizing punk rock as some kind of egalitarian utopia / dystopia where all the freaks and geeks were welcomed with open arms in a common community based on rejecting the fucked-up hypocrisy of the mainstream world. And it is easy to think of it in those terms. But all of us—from those lucky (or unlucky) souls who happened to be born in time to see it unfold in real time (the '70s), to the second generation who saw the emergence of American hardcore, to all those who have heard punk rock's call and answered in the intervening years—need to acknowledge and understand that punk rock has never been and never will be that utopia. We have seen punk's fatal flaw and it is us.

My research, for the moment, has put the pedagogical questions aside in favor of a new, more pressing, need: to come to terms with punk not only in its positive values, but also in its ugliest forms. Hence the new working title: *Re-Writing the Riot: Punk Rock Rhetoric and the Paradox of Subversion*. Before we can move responsibly forward with any kind of punk rock informed pedagogies, we first need to deal with our sometimes dark and shadowy histories.

Racism, sexism, homophobia, misogyny, violence, drug abuse, and self-destruction have all been intricately involved with punk rock scenes around the country and the world. And we do not get to conveniently omit these issues when we bring punk into the classroom. To do so would be to only become that which we reject. We would only be joining the chorus of those who want to muddy the waters and obfuscate the facts in favor of indoctrinating young people to the principles of one social / political / economic ideology or another. We are after something more.

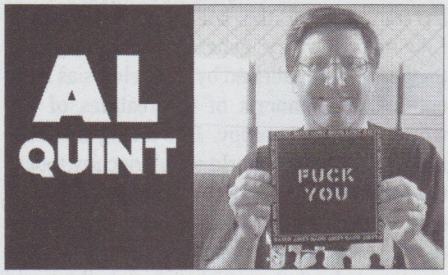
Despite their bad rap, a unique opportunity has emerged in the Millennial generation. Like nearly every generation before them, they have been labelled by their elders as lazy, entitled and ignorant of the realities of the world that they occupy. But facing the very real dangers of the world we all occupy today, the responsibility to fix the damage *will* fall to them. Therefore, it becomes our solemn duty to arm them with the knowledge and skills they need to make their own decisions and answer their own calls whether it is punk rock or not, because after all, no one has a monopoly on the meaning of punk.

It is my sincerest hope that through the development of comprehensive and inclusive punk rock pedagogies, the next generation can discover and create their own punk rock (that will more than likely involve *them* flipping *us* the bird—if not, then something is wrong). Each generation is born into and grows up within its own unique set of rhetorical circumstances that dictate youthful rebellion emerge in ways that respond to the political, cultural, social, economic, and technological circumstances of their time.

It is our job then to make sure that we continue to create and maintain educational places (across all levels of education—this is more important now than ever!) and spaces where students are free to explore these exigencies that will provide an environment (within the often restrictive culture of institutionalized education) where they can find their own way. For me, that has always been the greatest lesson I learned from punk. It is not only your right, but your responsibility to find your own path and chase your own dreams of what success means without the need to accept what it means for others. Punk persists because it has never been anything more than a dream whose meaning is significant only to the dreamer. Let us all keep dreaming and keep it alive in whatever form the future chooses to make it.

The Teaching Resistance column is designed to provide a platform for radical, subversive teachers/educators to share their ideas and draw attention to important issues around education; particularly compulsory- and community-based education. If you are a teacher (anywhere in the world) for students of primary or secondary school ages (K-12), Community Colleges, or alternative learning arrangements such as collectivist free schools, and you want to submit an

idea for a column, please write an email to teachingresistance@gmail.com. There is also an archive for this column which can be found at teachingresistancearchive.blogspot.com.



Time for an all-review segment, as I attempt to clear out some space in the overflowing US Postal Service tub that holds the latest arrivals. I actually had a former postal employee at my house recently and she told me she wouldn't turn me in for stealing government property. I'm grateful—I've got enough to deal with in my life.

One of the better shows I've seen so far this year paired Iceland's DAUÐYFLIN with Olympia's XYLITOL. Both feature raw, scalding punk attacks with vocalists—Alexandra and Laura respectively—casting out the venom with frightening, larynx-shredding aplomb. DAUÐYFLIN follow up their demo and 7" with *Ofeldi* (on Iron Lung), which translates to "violent." That's a good description of their sound. It's an aural hornets' nest, with a sputtering, barbed-wire guitar tone. A fusillade of feedback, thick bass-lines, and strong drumming—both at a fast'n'thumping clip and at a more deliberately pounding pace. The swirling "Níðstöng" has a nightmarish quality. By the way, I wasn't able to bribe anyone into requesting a BJÖRK song while they were playing. Hey, don't laugh—she has legit punk roots, having played in K.U.K.L. who were on the Crass label. And K.U.K.L. aren't anywhere near as good as DAUÐYFLIN.

XYLITOL have unleashed a pair of 7"s—a vinyl pressing of their demo on the 25 Diamonds label and the brand spankin' new *Is Toxic To Pigs??*, a split release from Total Negativity and Thrilling Living. Fast and blazing hardcore on both of these slabs, save for the BLACK FLAG "Damaged" feel for "Extruder" from the demo. I really love the sentiment of "I Don't Wanna Be Punished" from *Toxic*. The lyrics mention the whole "so what do you do" small talk starter, something I'm sick of. I'm me, I'm not what I do. It's about trying to compartmentalize people and put them into strict categories. You know, individuality.

There's also a split tour tape with three songs by DAUÐYFLIN and a pair from XYLITOL. The songs are just as explosive and there's an offbeat cover choice from XYLITOL, a cover of '77 era punk band the JERKS' "Get Your Woofing Dog Off Me," which is given quite a battering. (Iron Lung, ironlungrecords.bigcartel.com; Thrilling Living, thrillingliving.com; Total Negativity, totalnegativity.storenvy.com; 25 Diamonds, 25diamonds.com)

The five latest releases from Sorry State offer up some quality punk rock of different shadings. JOINT D≠'s third album, *Intelligence*, was originally released on tape last year by Scavenger of Death and actually recorded in 2014. That made my best-of list year and, if it's allowable, it could end up on this year's list as well. Kind of a comeback from their *Satan Is Real Is Real* album, which was good although not on the level of their debut *Strike Gently*. This packs a real wallop, with a dense, burning intensity. There's some complexity in the arrangements but it doesn't get in the way of this band's full-bore attack. And they sure don't seem to like Ayn Rand all that much, given the burning copy of *Atlas Shrugged* on the cover and caustic lyrics aimed at materialistic go-getters on "Rote Atlas." Nothing rote about this.

Like JOINT D≠, NATURAL CAUSES are a three-piece from North Carolina and, on their second self-titled album they're plying a nervy, garage / new wave / post-punk concoction (I think that covers it), mixing synth into the jabbing gnash. "Brat," Bad Habits," and "Behave" all provide a gnarled adrenaline rush. The two lengthier tracks—"Average Cost of Living" and "So It Goes"—have head-messing properties, even if they drag a bit. Along the same lines as bands like MIND SPIDERS or UV RACE, i.e. there's a punk spirit as well as a willingness to experiment a bit, without getting all pretentious about it.

When I put on EXCESSIVE CRUELTY's one-sided, self-titled 12" (the other side has an etching), I thought these guys kind of sounded like STRUNG UP, a somewhat overlooked band from the 2000s (one of their records was a split 12" with the great DIRECT CONTROL). Well, it turns out this band consists of 3/4 of that band's personnel and the sound is similar—no-nonsense, fast'n'scrappy hardcore punk that's always been a Bay Area mainstay. A hint of crossover but no metallic lead breaks, just plenty of six-string burn, with Klint yapping out the words in a rough, rat-a-tat-tat cadence.

Phoenix ragers GAY KISS's swansong release is their *Rounded Down* 7". More "outsider" hardcore, as I've called certain bands—savage, frayed, and intense. They come charging out of the gate with the raw attack of "Conceit" and then navigate through some hammering, damaged-sounding twists and turns. It's another scream from the soul and clawing against life's oppressiveness and, to use the title of the final song, they really expel the vitriol.

SKEMÄTA's second 12", *A Bright Shining Hell*, takes its title from a piece written by Mumia Abu-Jamal, which makes it fitting that the titular song and "Justice For All" deal with the prison industrial complex. The latter mentions the drug war and how it disproportionately affects people of color. Very timely given the fact that (as of now) you have a racist attorney general wanting to take an increasingly punitive approach to drug usage. As always, this is a punishing Swedish-styled hardcore attack. A formidable bass rumble, powerful drumming, and blazing guitar dishing out power chords as well as tasteful leads to accompany the throat-rending vocals. This is an ass-kicking hellride and SKEMÄTA are one of the better US bands playing this style.

SKEMÄTA guitarist Jeff Young has a new band, VITTNA, and their debut demo tape (limited to 100 copies) is equally ravaging. The Swedish influence is found on a few tracks but "Fatal Light" takes more of a hammering approach. There's also a subtly haunting tone in the guitar playing à la DIE KREUZEN, such as on "Hands Around Your Neck." There's nothing subtle about vocalist Sea Bass's harsh, visceral screams. A pulverizing debut. (Sorry State, sorrystaterecords.com)

You need a scorecard to figure it all out but there's plenty of cross-membership in these next few bands, all out of Austin, TX. All that matters is it's quality stuff. IMPALERS's new *Cellar Dweller* 12" doesn't even give you a chance to prepare yourself. No intro, just the immediate bombardment of "Secret Beach." A relentless, burning onslaught ruthlessly-executed and punctuated by Victor Gutierrez's string shredding lead work. He takes the reins for the instrumental "Cellar Dwellar III" (the other two "Cellar Dweller" songs were on last year's promo tape). The full color lyric poster has a drawing for each song and it shows society's ugly underside—from gentrifying yuppies to cops to racist rednecks to ruthless business operatives. No wonder wanting to barricade yourself away from all this shit sounds like a good idea—that's the gist of "It's So Hard." A sonic wrecking machine. (540, chaosintejas.bigcartel.com)

CRIATURAS's first release since 2013 is a four-song 7", *Ruido Antisocial*. A D-beat driven blitzkrieg, once again featuring Victor's smokin' guitar work accompanying Dru's fierce, echo-laden vocals. Past efforts had the occasional melodic flourish. That's absent here—this is just pure bile and rage. (Todo Destruido, tododestruido.blogspot.com)

GLUE's first vinyl release since 2014's

self-titled 7" is a self-titled 12" mini LP and it's a scorcher. Buzzing and burning hardcore, stomping all over everything in front of it with Harris' guttural growl as the perfect complement. "Flowers Of Friendship" pushes things in a catchier direction. Overall, the lyrics express plenty of alienation, summed up nicely with "I'll Never Be Like You." Striving for individuality and having no patience for people who choose to live as victims or won't escape their dreary existence. (La Vida Es Un Mus, lavidaesunmus.com; self-released, available through 540)

Next are two Philly bands that incorporate goth-y elements on their new releases, both on World Gone Mad. BLANK SPELL's first 12", *Miasma*, merges shimmery and stinging guitar lines with driving hardcore. Kind of like early SIOUXSIE AND THE BANSHEES jamming with DIE KREUZEN or a speedier PART 1. Cassidy's high-pitched vocals turn this into a nightmarish hellride.

HALDOL eschew the hardcore for something more traditionally goth / dark post-punk. On their latest album *The Totalitarianism of Everyday Life*, there's an energetic burn and a variety of ebbing and flowing mood shifts. There's dynamic interplay between the rubbery bass lines, powerful, multi-faceted drumming from Aaron Muchanic (who also plays in BLANK SPELL), and the dazzling array of guitar tones and textures from vocalist Geoff Smith. There's an otherworldly quality on "Nostalgia for Dreams" while "Decentrement" goes through a spacy middle passage. The lyrics do have a bleakness, conveying a totalitarian theme that is overarching. This theme is just as much about personal oppression—many songs touch on physical abuse—as well on a wider scale. Somehow though, you're left feeling invigorated instead of wanting to go into a dark room and draw the blinds. (World Gone Mad, worldgonemad.bigcartel.com)

TARANTÜLA is the new band with three former members of CÜLO and, this time, they've brought in a bass player. After a couple of kickass demos, their vinyl debut is a self-titled six-song 7" and provides no let-down. The sound is fuller and more tuneful in spots ("Dawning" in particular), along with some darker shadings, and there's plenty of punk kick, such as on "Pulverized By PCP." In other words, this isn't really CÜLO Part II but trying something a bit different. The lyrics exhibit some serious demon-wrestling but you have to respect the candor. Looking forward to hearing what comes next. (Lengua Armada, martincrudo.bigcartel.com).

Portland band PRESSING ON has quite a pedigree—former members of TALK IS POISON, FROM ASHES RISE, and RAW NERVES, among others. The *Future* 7" is a combination of bare-knuckled hardcore fury and crunch, with hearty lead and background vocals. There's an urgency in the playing and the lyrics—instead of taking a fatalistic approach, it's more of a call to arms. Sounding tough without sounding like tough guys. You can almost hear Bluto in "Animal House" yelling *"Let's go!!"* (Deranged, derangedrecords.com)

Finally, there are some pretty ugly sounds on the two latest Schizophrenic 7" releases. ABSOLUT's demo from 2013 has been given a vinyl pressing (they've since broken up and the drummer passed away). It's an unholy mess of raw crust madness that sounds like it's about to fly apart and there's an abundance of metallic guitar flourishes. A little definitely goes a long way here but it's a tumultuous excursion. SICK OF SHIT's *Fuck You Volume One* EP should give you a pretty good idea about their mindset—raging against the world—and working it out by playing loud, fast'n'raw hardcore punk. Musical primal scream therapy. (schizophrenicrex.com)

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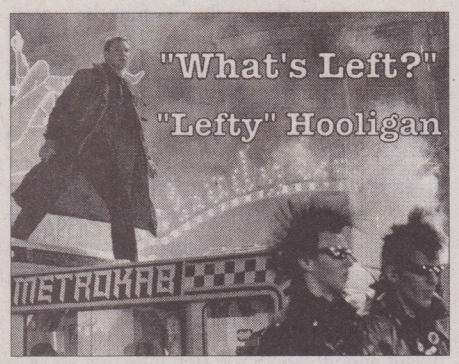


I stood on an outdoor train platform surrounded by snow in my fever dream. The sky was black, speckled with white, either stars or snow. The ground was white flecked with black and as I looked more closely at the snowy ground I grew distraught. It was like looking at white skin dotted with black pores, only the skin was like a sheet of greasy virginal Crisco and the black pits were putrefaction personified. I was deeply disturbed by the dual view, the juxtaposition of silky white as seen from a distance and black rot seen up close, and this ugly double vision had a smell, like burned hair.

It was a nightmare actually, the product of a bad case of measles when I was seven years old. When I startled from the terror of that dream, the combined view persisted well into my wakefulness and, to finally dispel the effect, I had to shake myself, blink a number of times, and crane my head back and forth. The fever produced a couple repeats of the nightmare while I was sick, but it was more upsetting when the night terrors returned after I was no longer ill. For a few years afterwards I had the horrible dream intermittently, complete with the frightening double vision and associated smell that continued after the dream woke me. I had to get out of bed each time and move around my room to make the hallucination dissipate.

It was my first experience of synesthesia. The twisted visual dream was intertwined with the smell, two senses linked together as one, the visual creating the olfactory. I was so freaked out about the double vision thing and preoccupied with preventing future nightmares that I didn't notice the connection until well after I had managed to suppress the dream's reoccurrence. I accidentally singed my hair as a fourteen-year-old adolescent pyromaniac playing with freelance rocket making and the stench immediately triggered a brief episode of nightmare double vision.

My second instance of synesthesia happened after I turned eighteen. I had just registered for the Vietnam draft, enrolled at Ventura Junior College in anticipation of transferring as a junior to UC Santa Cruz, and started hanging out with some high school friends, now attending college, who were part of Campus Crusade for Christ. They gently badgered me to attend prayer circles and bible studies, triggering my latent Catholic guilt feelings about everything from masturbation to experimenting with drugs. One Saturday afternoon, as I walked through the lemon and avocado groves near my home in deep, troubled contemplation, I was visited by God.

At least that's how it felt at that moment. Everything around me became brilliant, clear, and sparkling. I felt immersed in everything around me and simultaneously elevated above it all; I had a sense of personal calm, but not of peace; and there was a burning firewood and slightly fruity smell. I had the sensation of being in the presence of something vast, powerful, and absolutely frightening, something with which I was in communion, something that was about to change my life. For the first time I understood the meaning of the word awe, a feeling of reverence and respect mixed with fear and trembling. It was not in any way a pleasant sensation. I was simultaneously overwhelmed, exalted, and terrified.

Thus began my brief stint as a born-again Christian, where being touched by God was inextricably linked to the smell of the burning bush. It quickly evaporated into my longstanding atheism as I ultimately tried to explain away my experience—with regard to the smell: "Well, I was in the middle of

a lemon grove so maybe there was some brush burning nearby." I eventually started taking psychedelics and noticed the similarity between those chemical experiences and my spiritual one, including lots of drug-induced synesthesia. But to call my mystical experience biochemically based doesn't say much as all our experiences are ultimately biochemical in origin. Only much later, when I read Barbara Ehrenreich's book *Living with a Wild God*, did I reconcile myself to the possibility there are still mysteries to the universe to which I'm not privy.

I may never have been touched by God but I have been hammered by the migraine devil, a surefire cause for my synesthesia nowadays. I started getting migraines when I was around forty-three. They were rare, and both classic—with prodrome, aura, and excruciating headache—and intense, incapacitating me for eight hours minimum. I became dissociative to the point of verbal and mental incoherence until I just went to sleep for the rest of the day, to wake sometime later with a horrific migraine hangover. Over the years, my migraines increased in frequency and decreased in severity, so that I now get one every month or so, each just a little bit of an aura, and no appreciable, immediate headache. I have tried botox treatments and now do a micro-dose of an anticonvulsant drug.

A recent migraine started with sensitivity to light, then a dizzying head rush when I stood up, quickly converting to a sparkly scotoma complete with scintillating lights and jagged black-and-white anasazi lines, all sharply bordered into a blind spot that slowly floated across my vision. I had errands to run, but I took the time to let the brief aura dissipate. It did not automatically turn into a headache, but the disassociation started on the drive down the hill to a nearby commercial neighborhood. Everything appeared simultaneously vaguely familiar and utterly strange. I seemed to be in a Tyrolean Alpine village, odd and quaint, at the bottom of a deep, dark mountain ravine. The crisp air was saturated with the odor of burnt metal.

The Greek prefix syn- means "united, with, together, at the same time." Thanks to my migraines, I experience low level hallucinations and synesthesia intermittently, where my senses run together. Nothing like my childhood fever dreams or my adolescent altered states of consciousness, yet still a departure from reality. Even without the outright instances of synesthesia, I grasped that my sense of smell was somehow linked to my other senses, as when the shape of the trees in Golden Gate Park seemed connected to the park's loamy smell, triggering vivid childhood memories from when I lived with my parents in San Francisco between the ages of three and six years old.

I realized early on that the real world wasn't what it seemed to be, and might actually be much more than it seemed. I certainly didn't arrive at the absurd belief that we create our own reality or that mind is the only reality, and I'm particularly disdainful of the post-truth assertion that simply believing something makes it so. Climate change, like gravity, is real, whether we believe in it or not. But it would be too facile to claim that my ability to juggle different points of view comes from these experiences of altered reality I've had throughout my life. I haven't become any less tolerant of fascism simply because I can understand fascist ideology or comprehend where a fascist is coming from.

I also don't doubt that my unconscious capacity to synthesize sensory input in part accounts for my artistic and literary creativity. But as a conscious basis for originality, synthesis is overrated. Both Alice Yaeger Kaplan and Kevin Coogan cited the French fascist Robert Brasillach who wrote that Communism and Fascism would one day be seen as "the two poetries" of the twentieth century. We now seem to be inundated by attempts to synthesize left-wing and right-wing ideologies in efforts to "go beyond" Left and Right. These calls to transcend the orthodox Left / Right political model almost all come from the Right, it must be noted. Current Left / Right crossover politics should also be pointed out for having originated in nightmare with the goal of ever greater nightmare. The separate totalitarian horrors of Communism and Fascism only anticipate greater horrors in some terrifying synthesis to come. This political combination is entirely voluntary. My fever dreams and migraines are not something I wish to relive, and even my spiritual experience was unpleasant. Plus, they were not of my choosing.

But enough about the sick joke that equates poetry with indiscriminate terror and mass murder.

Earlier this year, the arts and culture magazine *Pork* made an official decision to no longer use Nazi imagery on their website or their print magazine. In an article in the *Willamette Weekly* founder and editor Sean Äaberg explains that after the election *Pork* no longer wanted to be associated with imagery that supports what he sees as a new "national tone."

When explaining his previous reasons for using a heavy dollop of SS and Nazi imagery as well as writing editorials like "In Defense of Blackface" and dressing white people up like booze guzzling parodies of Native Americans for campy photoshoots he says: "From the Bay Area perspective, we thought the that the Northwest was this Nazi-ridden hellhole... When we moved up to Eugene we found that the reality had overcome that, to the extent that if you talk to Antifa or SHARPs, they have had no one to beat up since the late '90s."

I'll contribute to illuminating for *Pork* and their lovers why questioning "Antifa and SHARPs" on how many people they have had to beat up recently is not an appropriate metric against which to measure violent racism in a particular area. It also contributes to obscuring the very longtime active white power contingencies who have been organizing in the Pacific Northwest with large active centers in and around Eugene and Portland (where *Pork* is now based).

A simple Google search or walking around and talking to actual people could have led Sean and assorted *Pork*ers to the saga of Portland Police Chief Mark Kruger, who not only created a literal shrine to dead Nazis in a public park but was also caught *on film* pepper spraying a television news anchor and physically assaulting protesters at three different anti-war rallies.

Or perhaps Sean could have tried to make it to the many, public, sliding scale viewings of *Arresting Power*, a recent documentary about the connections between Oregon's deep history of organized white nationalism and habitual ritualistic racist police violence and killings.

Indeed, even the "Bay Area perspective" that Sean leans on as an excuse to be a reactionary butthole with too much photoshop access is also rife with plenty of examples of the prevailing issues of institutionalized white nationalism. Several Bay Area law enforcement branches are currently under scrutiny for the multi-agency exploitation of a minor sex worker. Fourteen years ago Oakland PD made headlines regarding the widespread police gang "the Riders" who planted drugs, falsely arrested, and regularly beat up Black people.

I live two blocks from a central, busy BART station in Oakland where, every morning, tech employees line up red-eyed from not enough sleep or too many b-vitamins. Across from the station sits a new development hewn from recycled shipping containers. People I know, taking advantage of the comparatively cheaper rent, have opened up small retail spaces. All stacked together are a record shop,

a bookstore, a queer skate shop with a pirate radio station, and more.

Last week a friend of mine overheard someone in line at a local Indian food joint bragging about how he was involved in the project. He said that the recycled aesthetic wasn't just a look but served a dual purpose of being a temporary modular structure that could be planted, used to drive up the surrounding property value, and then, in five or ten years, dismantled for a housing development and put somewhere else to do all over again.

I did the research and found evidence connecting the landlord / developer to several other gentrification loft projects in West Oakland as well as speaking at a conference about the shipping container shopping center. He was relieved not to have to worry about parking because the ripe future of driverless cars would soon be reality. I found the owner of the construction company that built it and confirmed with my friend that he was indeed the person who he overheard at the restaurant.

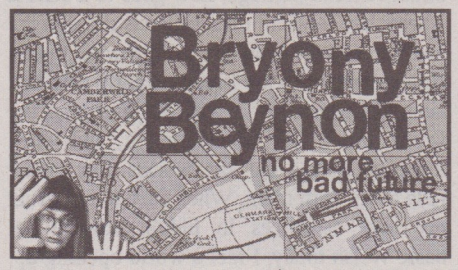
The landlord / developer convinced many of the tenants that his intentions were to create a space for "community and small businesses." The wife of the construction company owner is a lefty documentary filmmaker. The owners of the aforementioned shops are punks.

This isn't specific to the Bay—we see it everywhere. Large music fests backed by corporate entities that create exciting backdrops for tradeshows and industry conferences are all concentrated in urban areas that gentrify and dehumanize surrounding communities. We push a false narrative that we cannot help how we do our work. We are all victims of capitalism and workers grinding along in the machine. And we hit our heads against this ceiling over and over again. Especially when we can only imagine a world where there are no other options.

These shipping container complexes dot the face of the earth and many have similar futures as the one two blocks away from my house. These buildings and many others are tethered to my future and the futures of my neighbors. My landlord has openly told us she wants us to pay market rate rent or get out. She's attempted two illegal rent increases in the past two years. She did this *after* offering our house Bernie Sanders signs for our yard. I'm certain she sees herself as another cog in the machine just plugging along.

Oakland's housing crisis is visually palpable. Large populations have been pushed into RVs, vans, and tent cities under the freeway overpasses all over the city. At this moment, it is more likely that there will be another Nazi rally in my city than it will be for me to be able to stay in my home for another five years.

Reality being complicated isn't an excuse to ignore the complications; it's an opportunity to examine life, to interrogate what we take for granted, to be able to dynamically assess something, and as terrible as it is to say, hold space for not only what is likely but what is possible.



SHWMAE, WYT TI'N HOFFI PYNC ROC? A primer on Welsh (and Welsh-language) bands!

Today marks the first anniversary of me living in Australia. The relocation has had the side effect of an intense increase in interest in my own roots. I'm a freak for family trees right now. I was always a little bit shocked to meet people in America who knew loads about and were often very keen to claim a lineage to Scotland or Ireland, but exhibited blank faces as to the existence of Wales. (Fewer still non-Brits are aware of the Welsh language, which has been spoken in one form or another since 550 AD, but more about that later.) For the uninitiated though, this is a small country of around three million people, which was once a sovereign nation with its own language, culture, and monarchy until it was colonized back in 1282 by the English army of Edward I after a prolonged and bloody war of conquest. The word "Wales" means "land of foreigners" in Olde English. Wales is recognized by historians as the initial testing ground for a range of imperialist strategies used again in Ireland, which they invaded around a century later, and then right across the empire to (slightly) more well-known and horrific effects. The many centuries that have passed since this invasion, and the general lack of knowledge around it will leave many Brits scoffing at the suggestion that Wales was colonized country. I once felt it was sort of distasteful to make this connection until I learnt more. The colonization of Wales never involved the genocide or enslavement of the Welsh people, but its deliberately diminished status as a secondary '"principality" of the UK has still had deep and lasting consequences. It continues to do so many centuries later even now that Wales is partially self-governed through a National Assembly and the process of devolution in 1998. Many crucial areas of funding and prioritization are still subject to English legislation, and unlike Scotland, Wales does not control its own legal, criminal or educational system. Poverty has long been endemic and generational. The poorest place in the whole of the UK by some margin is West Wales.

One theory put forward about this is that Wales never had a chance to develop its own bourgeoisie because the means of production and the land was owned by English industrialists. Without a class of Welsh people who had spent centuries acquiring property rights within their own country, the wealth created through mineral exploitation during the advent of eighteenth century industrialization was rarely spent in the Welsh economy. Because of this, many still associate Wales with coal. A consequence of the last seven hundred years has a been a political and cultural identity very deeply hinged on radical tradition and rebellion in the classic sense of the word. The 12th century uprisings bred constant waves of resistance to an imposed feudalist order. From religious non-conformism to the spirit of international solidarity, Welsh radicalism is the reason the UK has the NHS (the very idea of socialized medicine was modelled on a miner's cooperative health initiative started in Tredegar, near Merthyr Tydfil) and is why so many of the international brigade volunteers in the Spanish Civil War were Welsh miners.

Many have no idea about the centuries long campaign of linguistic suppression (towards a stated goal of eradication) against the Welsh language, in spite of its partial but beautiful resurgence in the last thirty-five years. Most Welsh kids (in the South, at least) first learn about this on school trips to a living museum called St. Fagan's, where we would be encouraged to re-enact parts of a barbaric 19th century classroom practice aimed at discouraging children from speaking in their own language. This was done by placing a wooden plaque (known as a "Welsh not") around the neck of any child who was heard speaking Welsh, who could have it removed only if they told the teacher of another child doing the same thing, with incentive provided by the fact that the child wearing the "not" at the end of the day would be duly beaten (thankfully they didn't reenact this part, but the terror was real). My dad recalled his Mamgu telling him about how she had to whisper in Welsh in the playground or else she would "get the not." This practice and the use of the "not" was considered so effective that it was mimicked later many times during British colonization, including places like Nigeria where it was referred to as a "monitor." Efficacy here meant "primitive" languages being caned out of several generations of children until their own children had no

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words left to whisper. Somewhat ironically, what first brought Welsh back from the brink of extinction was the translation of the bible into Welsh by Protestant missionaries. I was interested to learn recently that the same practice was carried out in some indigenous nations across Australia, and aboriginal language advocates today scour copies of these translated bibles as they are the only written records of languages which were even more effectively destroyed over a generation ago, using far more barbarous tactics.

As someone who grew up speaking Welsh and English at home, all of this pulls at me in a place I can't really name in any language. As a teenager I was embarrassed to even try and reply to my dad in the language he spoke to me in. I didn't see it as necessary. I never had to fight to hear Welsh on TV or first on road signs, but I did fight my (English) mother to speak English in a Welsh accent, a war that my sisters and I sadly lost so now I move through the world with a placeless "British" voice. The strange weight of a class anxiety I still don't fully understand meant our voices were constantly policed to rid them of a Welsh inflection, which was somehow seen as "less than" even though the language was spoken in our home. Caught between two stools with bigger battles to fight (pink hair and stretched lobes, etc.) I never quite held on to enough of an accent to carry it over the border when I left home, which means I have to prove my background constantly. I was totally blindsided to learn later in life that the demand to establish an entirely Welsh-medium TV channel (S4C) was only won under intense campaigning that included sit-ins, license fee strikes, and the threat of a hunger strike by the leader of Plaid Cymru political party leader Gwynfor Evans. Thatcher capitulated to this in 1982. I was blown away to learn that the stakes had ever felt that high for the simple existence of something I had taken completely for granted, and ashamed that the history of this struggle was never taught to us in school. Dad's insistence on flicking back to that channel at the first opportunity suddenly felt much less arbitrary and annoying. Today, 19% of people in Wales can speak Welsh, with more learning every year, and there are rules in place that prioritize the Welsh language in state institutions and for employment. A model that enables what was once dismissed as a dead language to be revived feels like a beautiful possibility for language advocates here in Australia, where, of course, the true wages of colonizer logic in its fullest, most terrorizing, and deadly form eclipse anything that ever happened in Wales. More than anything it is a demonstration that where political will is present or can be dragged into being, things can change. Just not without a fight.

These days things are thankfully different, and my tiny nieces and nephews happily take for granted that they compulsorily learn Welsh in school, alongside Sudanese and Syrian refugee kids who easily add Welsh to the many other languages they have picked up. A space that lies beyond an English frame. One of my nieces, born outside Wales with South African heritage, now goes to a school where they learn all their subjects through the medium of Welsh, so she will grow up fluent. A language advocate I read recently said that language is not just a way of describing the world, but a way of creating it, and when those languages die, the worlds they create fade away with them. When I try to construct my own sentences in pidgin attempts at basic Welsh today, I feel a world opening up. Another frame.

As a result of all this, it's probably not a surprise that I'm a freak for Welsh-language punk, and if we're talking about that then I have to start with LLYGOD FFYRNIG ("fierce mice"), four seventeen-year-olds who self-released the first Welsh-language punk single exactly a year after the BUZZCOCKS made *Spiral Scratch*. They were from Llanelli, a small town on the doorstep of West Wales that sits just beyond the grey, sludgy estuary that I crossed to get to school where wild horses would occasionally drown when the tide rushed in too suddenly for them. It's also the closest town to the small village where I visited my mamgu most Sundays, staring into her psychedelic blue carpet while she regaled us with local gossip in rapid fire "Wenglish," presumably so my mum could follow along. In the early '60s, when she was still running the village's local shop as a widow, my dad took his first job at the local steel refinery, learning how to measure and test the resilience of each slab of steel once an hour from the bottom of a rigidly enforced pecking order. Fifteen years later, the subject of LLYGOD FFYRNIG's *Melody Maker* single of the week hit was job prospects at the NCB (National Coal Board). This gruff yet tuneful proto-hardcore, with their sparse, barked, lyrics, highlights the grim reality of what was a choice between *"byw ar y dole"* (living on the dole) or hot, dangerous, and exhausting work as a miner where *"ddim ond silicosis sydd ar ol"* (only silicosis—an occupational lung disease also known as Miner's phthisis—is left), succinctly explaining a reality which is often lost when people look back to what was being fought for during the strikes that would come. There's an amazing and incongruous RUSH-esque solo halfway through this growling banger, and the B-side has some cheeky Sais (English) baiting and a song about snogging a girl called Bethan at the bus stop. Spot the comment on the KBD Records blog where one member chastises the other for "punching a cow in that barn we used to practice in."

The first Welsh-language single I bought was a reissue of a single by a band called Y SEFYDLIAD. I, and the internet, seem to know almost nothing about this band and I can't check the liner notes because it is in storage in Swansea and I'm in Sydney. Their only single, *Cerddor Cymraeg*, came out in 1983 and is weirdly euphoric, punky power pop that is probably the fastest Welsh-language punk I've heard. Not to be confused with AIL SYMUDIAD, who are more straight-up power pop, and have a song called "Garej Paradws" (Paradise Garage) which was apparently about a punk clothes shop in Cardiff. Delightful stuff.

ANRHEFN means disorder in Welsh. Founded by the legend Rhys Mewn in Bangor in 1982, they were definitely one of the better known Welsh-language punk bands of the era, championed by John Peel who frequently played them and many other Welsh-language bands on his radio show. ANRHEFN signed to Workers' Playtime at one point (an Alternative Tentacles subsidiary) who asked them to write and release something in English, and were enthusiastically told where to go. They did massively well in Europe, where the monoglot stranglehold on pop culture was much less of an issue. They followed a similar trajectory to many of their English-medium UK82 counterparts, softening their edges into a more stadium rock type of place at first, but there's still a cool vibe to even their later stuff which transitions into an experimental electronic type of place and goes all the way to 1995!

Y CYRFF (the Bodies) from Conwy come off as a pretty good mid-'80s guitar pop band, with weirdly hypnotic NEW ORDER-style bass lines and a couple of songs which display the occasional flash of gothy gloomth, like lost SISTERS OF MERCY cuts…but in Welsh. Members would go on to form alt-rock triple platinum group CATATONIA during the later "Cool Cymru" years with a gal named Cerys who went to my school. This was the Welsh outcrop of the cultural moment known as "Cool Britannia" which fomented around BLUR and OASIS and Tony Blair's boom years.

Then there's DATBLYGU (which means develop) who you may already know about due to their cult following and status as a kind of catalyst for a lot of this '80s Welsh-language rock boom—they even have a Peel Session! Sad and often meandering, slightly nihilist poetry in Welsh sung-spoken by David R. Edwards over propulsive casio, washy blips, and phasey synths. The lyrics are often super arch, sternly shit talking the limits of Welsh cultural hegemony. David R. Edwards suffered a breakdown just before "Cool

Cymru" exploded, a moment in which he and Patricia Morgan (who wrote all the music) coulda-shoulda found much, much bigger fame. They have nevertheless retained that cult status, playing an All Tomorrow's Parties a few years ago and releasing a ton of stuff on both Anrhefn recordings (founded by Rhys Mewn) and Ankst, a prolific and still-active experimental label founded in Aberystwyth.

In 1989, TRADDODIAD OFNUS (Tradition of Fear) made a wicked almost industrial post-punk album called *Welsh Tourist Bored*—the drummer is playing a couple of "nuclear" gas canisters in one video for a song about the Falklands War called "El Hombre Secretivo." They're floating down the Thames in sunglasses. One of them also made a record with some teenagers as POP NEGATIF WASTAD (Negative Pop Forever) which is some wonky synth-based, acid-inflected, weirdness, and very indicative of the time. The Welsh-language infrastructure and funding for arts and media caught onto this wave of new bands fast, meaning that a lot of them frequently appeared live on S4C and made bizarre cut'n'paste videos which are 100% worth looking up. I just recently uncovered another band of this era, called U-THANT (which despite looking like a Welsh word were actually named after the UN General Secretary at the time), through these videos, and their sick intuitive style (in the case of U-THANT, it's all football shirts and shades, shoulder-bargey lad dancing, ten years before Liam Gallagher) is a beautiful thing to behold.

Beyond that lot, there are of course bands of pretty much every punk subgenre which formed and were active in Wales, but due to the fact that they sang in English, people often don't know them to be Welsh. I very much enjoy a bare-bones very proto-Oi! banger by a Welsh band called VENOM. The 1981 song "Saturday Afternoon Trouble" is a primitive terrace-brawler anthem played with zero distortion that is pretty perfect. Shortly after, singer Dai (AKA Snakey) went into Swansea town center with a knife with the express intention of "doing someone in," stabbed some poor bastard in the arse, and went down for eighteen months. Much later on (and much, much more right on) there's the very well-known early '80s Cardiff skins the OPPRESSED and the PARTISANS (the best song is "Killing Machine," duh) who inflected a bit of the UK82 cockney bark into their delivery but actually hailed from Bridgend. Oh, and ICONS OF FILTH? Also Welsh, and winners of what should be an award for probably the sickest and most obnoxious use of a phaser on "Asking Too Much."

It's also worth checking out another compilation called *Is the War Over?* which was pulled together by creepy Cardiff post-punk group REPTILE RANCH on their Z Block label, who are now potentially the first Welsh band to make the cover of *Maximum Rocknroll* (issue 408). They "incubated" YOUNG MARBLE GIANTS prior to their signing to Rough Trade and it shows. For more of this ilk, there's an entire Welsh *Messthetics* compilation (number 104 in the series) . It focuses mostly on South Wales and there's lots of outsider clanging and bleak social commentary to soak up. My favorite jam on here is a bonus track from the TAX EXILES called "Rough in the Valley," a deranged, insanely overdriven, and noticeably snottier breed of punk than everything else on the comp, which is from 1977. Total no-fi cardboard box recording that comes off like a thuddy, swaggerless, version of the DEAD BOYS but way more shit-fi, like if Stiv Bators had been from from Pontypridd. There's a sick apocryphal story about the singer John Evans, who is still a punk, chasing Sid Vicious and Johnny Rotten down a side street for picking on some hippies in the street.

Ok, hopefully you're convinced that you need to post me your LLYGOD FFRYNIG record to me now as cultural reparations. *Diolch am darllen, ac paid anghofio: Twll dun bob sais! bryonybeynon@gmail.com*

Hear the skinhead roar–Skinhead!

ANTISOCIAL was right. There're too many people saying too many things. So I'll keep it short this month. It's time for you readers to grovel at the booted feet of Optimus Oius! That's a reference to Trajan if you brainiacs were wondering. Guess you weren't paying as much attention in school as you thought. Oi! over all!

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DALTON – *Deimalati* LP (Hellnation): *Ciao Roma!* The DALTON boys are back! *Deimalati* is their sophomore follow up to 2015's *Come Stai?* DALTON—comprised of members from Italian Oi! bands PINTA FACILE and DUAP—have moved further from their straight ahead Oi! roots and into an amorphous and at times interesting musical space that is far from chaotic but still unpredictable. The record opens with "Gaia" a piano pub stomper that caught my subculture ear with a terrace chant of "*Bootboys! Bootboys!*" I was expecting another glammy schlock-fest but for the most part they shy away from full on bovver-boottery. "La Dose fa il Veleno" is an upbeat garage-Oi! bopper that features a nice harmonica run. (I don't ever want to type out "nice harmonica run" again though.) They touch on some '60s freakbeat with a cover of LUIGI TENCO's "E se ci Diranno". A toe tapper for sure. "Estate" starts off bright and uptempo; an almost pop Oi! number but dives into dark and claustrophobic digressions coming back up for air for a minute before going back under. There's a needless cover of "Transmetropolitan" by the POGUES. You got a near acoustic ballad that translates to "The Vineyard of Death." Oof. Finally, the record goes full circle with the closer, "A Cuor Leggero," another piano and organ driven tune, except now they've added saxophone! Whew! There's a lot to like about *Deimalati* but in the end it's scattered and too subdued. Dinner party background Oi! is not something I want in my life. Next!

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DEATH RIDGE BOYS – Demo 2017: OK. OK...OK. DEATH RIDGE BOYS are a new punk / Oi! / rock'n'roll band from Portland. Members were and are in a bunch of hardcore bands I've never heard of: TALK IS POISON, PRESSING ON, RAW NERVES. Paul Burdette is in the band too. I don't care about TRAGEDY but that first CRIMINAL DAMAGE record is still a scorcher (*"And it won't be stopped by rain!"*). The songwriting is tight on this. It's obvious these dudes are ringers. Sometimes this reminds me of FUCKED UP and then it jumps into some HUDSON FALCON blazing street punk shit...And maybe some CRIMINAL DAMAGE muscle. Lyrics are topical as fuck: Tamir Rice, the alt-right, political corruption, taking responsibility for humanity's impact on the planet, and being "on the right side of history." This aint no RASH record. I'm getting a real Socialist Alternative vibe. Like, if DEATH RIDGE BOYS played for a Bernie 2020 rally I'd say, "That makes a lot of sense." In an email exchange with the band they said they "don't collectively adhere to a political label" and that they "want the songs to speak for themselves." Fair enough. A physical tape will be out soon on the Work Hard Mosh Harder label and then hopefully it'll make its way to vinyl. Give a listen: deathridgeboys.bandcamp.com

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THE GIFT – *Running Around this Town* LP (Time for Action): The hard mods of Nantes are back with an LP worth of brick wall power pop. I don't own a scooter or have any interest in getting one but if I had a record player in the Ranger I'd be zipping around Pittsburgh pretending it was a GS. The GIFT do a stellar

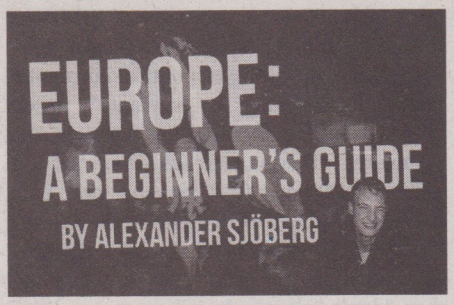
job of playing this style without it being a hokey piss take on a MERTON PARKAS album. This is sharp and subdued and cool. The band might have cribbed their name from a JAM album, but this sounds like a cold brew of the LAMBRETTAS, the SHIVVERS, and early CHRIS ISAAK. (Yinz never listened to *Silvertone*?) Most of the songs on here seem to be about losing sweeties or wishing you had a sweetie. My wife's name is "Oi!" so I don't worry about sweeties but if you're a sucker for love here's another reason to scoop this up! "*One day your ego will burst in a rush of lust.*" *Oui! Oui!*

***

That's all for this month. Things still on the back burner: New OUTREAU (not as new by the time I get around to reviewing it), RUDE RIOT from Ukraine, and THUG BOOTS if it arrives. We'll see. 'Til then, keep your nose clean.

ENDNOTES:

1) AmericanBootGang@Gmail.com [kissy-cat emoji] [American flag emoji]
2) Next stop Skull Fest 9... [skull emoji] [googly-eye poop emoji]
3) Only noobs and posers think lace color matter. [cop emoji]
4) Making threats on the internet will forever be wack. I'm too adjusted for any of this but if you're an Antifa-LARPer that needs to try to punch me in the back of the head you can find me at the rare Oi! show in Pittsburgh (NO TIME shows don't count) or cashing my check at the bank in Edgewood Town Center every Friday around 6:00 pm. Let's chat. [tea cup emoji]



Today I woke up for the second day in a row with headaches. Hammering headaches. And I know exactly what caused them and what's to blame: drinking. The thing is, I played a gig last night with ÚLCERAS—and the night before that HELLSHOCK were in town—and would I miss that? No way. But every time I go to a gig, I know that the next day will be slow; I know I'll wake up late and that I'll probably have a hangover—never a really bad one, just, well y'know, a slow day.

Do I have a drinking problem? Perhaps, but, if that's the case, I'm not overreaching by saying that I share that diagnosis with more than two-thirds of my native Danish punk scene, or maybe even more. This is the story I want to tell in this column. The story of a drinking culture so closely tied to the punk scene that I sometimes forget that there's other options than late night gigs with binge drinking. I feel kind of ashamed writing that, but it's very true and, as I get older, it is becoming a bigger problem. Destroying the weekend and being sleepy all Monday is simply not an option anymore.

But let's get to the bottom of the bottle. What's the reason for the binge drinking culture, what are its ties to punk, and is Denmark a special case?

Denmark and many European—and especially Scandinavian countries—have a wet and alcohol-infused history. We love our beer, and even back in the Viking age, alcohol was consumed as an alternative to water simply because the brewing process made it safe to drink. Later brandy and vodka-like products flooded society. It's not only a Danish thing; in Sweden the alcohol consumption became such an issue that an anti-alcohol movement was established, similar to that of the United States. Laws were passed there and here in Denmark, but alcohol was never banned like in the US (which proved to be a ridiculously impossible policy anyway).

Let's get back to the present. Today, alcohol is consumed on a grand scale in Denmark and it serves as a way to socialize; if you party with friends, colleagues, or whoever, you drink. We start very young, too; I was (piss) drunk for the first time when I was thirteen, and that is in no way special in Danish society. I have heard stories of people buying beers at eleven and twelve. It is simply not frowned upon.

Now some might point out that France and other wine-producing countries have a high consumption rate as well. This is true but the numbers show that Danes have the highest alcohol consumption for young people in all of Europe. And it's not like we drink quality stuff, the beer is piss, the wine is cheap and sour, the booze is for mixing only. It is a recipe for disaster.

But what about the punk connection then? Why am I writing this in *Maximum Rocknroll* and not the local paper?

See, the Danish way of drinking usually goes like this: first, you find a gang of friends and hang out—the "pre-party" as it's called here. At the pre-party, you drink a lot; the point is basically to get shitfaced before you hit the city so as to keep it on the cheap later in the evening and then, of course, socialize with your friends. Later, typically around 10:00–11:00 pm in the evening, you leave and go with your crew to a show or a bar. This means that any gig here will not have bands perform earlier than 10:00 pm, and I'm not exaggerating, same goes for the weekday gigs. Many people are complaining about this nowadays, because it means the last band will perform pretty late. It's shit for the musicians and it's shit for anyone wanting to do anything the next day. After the last band, the drinking continues until people are shitfaced, go home, or get kicked out of the venue.

To this day—and that's after thirteen years of attending gigs every week—I haven't experienced many truly successful gigs following another model. It is simply not the same. The crowd needs their fuel and, if you do a matinée gig, it's incredibly hard to get people to get in the pit and act enthusiastic.

The same can be said about the spirit at the gig itself. Rarely will the crowd be super enthusiastic until after some brews, and that means the first band or two will seldom see a moshpit. Its equivalent is found in Danish nightclubs where the dance floor will be the most awkward spot in town until very, very, late in the night when people get drunk and start believing they can dance (which they for sure can't, drunk or not).

I remember back in the day when I booked gigs. I got into this discussion every time: will this and that band have a truly great experience if people haven't had some drinks? I'm guilty of making decisions on that basis more than often, even at big festivals. You could say that I'm pointing out an obvious yet unsolvable and natural "problem." "Of course there'll be booze at the gig, dude, what's the issue?" I can hear many people asking me that, even a younger version of myself.

I'm not here to ban alcohol. I love drinking, but when I see so many of my friends stopping going to gigs because they get too late and are all about alcohol consumption, I get sad. We need to have a scene where working people, parents, and anyone really still can attend gigs while living their daily lives as well.

I think the Danish punk culture—and the punk culture of many similar countries, especially Sweden and Norway—should change. I think we need fewer gigs revolving around late night parties (which *definitely* should still be a thing), and more gigs revolving around, well, the gig. That's what keeps us together, right? The music. I believe we need people from many different walks of life in the scene, and right now it's more or less impossible to see gigs and run a "normal" life with work, kids, etc., at the same time. You have to choose and that sucks, I wanna stay part of the scene for life. And while it's easy not to consume so much alcohol, it's simply hard to stay active when everything is revolving around a party instead of the actual musical experience.

No bad vibes here. Only <3 for punk. Over and out.

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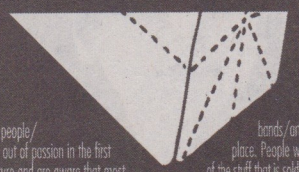

We like to meet people/ bands/art/sport/etc. that do what they do out of passion in the first place. People who believe in a underground culture and are aware that most of the stuff that is sold nowadays under that flag is total crap only made to make money. And, if you feel you can write and relate, get in touch. To put it with Fugazi's words:

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NEON

by Lurker Grand / Astrid Spirig / Dagmar Heinrich / Gitta Gsell.
Translation by Arndt Boetl. Photos courtesy of Water Wing.

In the second half of the '70s, over here in Switzerland we also had this movement called "punk," which questioned all conventions. Through this movement, hundreds of women catapulted themselves onto the stage. Between 1977 and 1990, 1,430 records and tapes were released under the umbrella of punk and post-punk. 28% of these releases had women participating, which means that women were represented on every fourth release. We had three bands—Kleenex / LiLiPUT (with temporary male participation), Chin Chin, and Les Raines Prochaines—that were made up exclusively of punkettes and whose musical influence is still appreciated today, particularly abroad. By having a closer look at another exclusively female band, Neon, we will turn back time with this article. Alex Yusimov of Mississippi and Water Wing has already released several Kleenex / LiLiPUT and Chin Chin records over the last few years in conjunction with Kill Rock Stars. Together with Static Age (Berlin, Germany) and Swisspunk, he has just released a single by Neon with two songs from 1978.

THE SURPRISE

Much to her surprise, Dagmar Heinrich, the guitarist of Zürich's punk band Neon, found an old tape with recordings of the two songs "Neon" and "Nazi Schatzi" last year. Thirty-seven years earlier, in December 1978, Neon had played on a show on national Swiss television called *Frauen im Showbusiness* (Women in Show Business). Back in the day, this TV appearance didn't make the musicians very happy. They were not allowed to play live. Both songs were pre-recorded for playback in a studio. Neon had to fight hard for these songs. The director's voice, which gave orders from the void, wasn't appreciated by the four women at all.

However, let's turn back time a little....

WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT

On December 31, 1970 the Autonomous Republic Bunker was founded as a micro-state within the city of Zürich. Dagmar—then seventeen years old—used to visit Bunker and other hip locations where a free(er) spirit would be found, such as Schwarzer Ring (a hangout places for youngsters with the hippest jukebox in town), Eckstein, Oberdörfli, Hintere Bodega, the Evergreen, a nightclub called Platte 27 and Klub Flöte in the youth house Drahtschmidli. Dagmar remembers that she drew, scribbled and wrote into her diary in these places. This is also where she met other punkers, talked philosophy, danced, or just lurked in a corner observing what was going on.

On March 16 1971, the right for women to vote came into action in most cantons. Switzerland was one of the last European countries to grant their female population full civil rights. In the same year, the confederal petition for a referendum for the decriminalization of abortion was submitted. A majority of the needed signatures on the petition had been collected by the FBB (*Frauenbefreiungsbewegung*, or women's liberation movement). The FBB emerged in the late '60s out of both the women's and the students' movements and was part of the autonomous scene. The FBB discussed non-punishable termination of pregnancy, sexual harassment of women in general, rape, pornography, racism, sexism, and the wage gap. As part of a *Frauenrakete* (Women's Rocket; a theatre group that men were also part of), partly organised by the FBB, the proto-punk band Troppo (made up of men and women with Kurt Maloo on guitar) gave their first concert at Rote Fabrik in Zürich on December 19, 1976. As Kurt remembers, "They needed a man to play in their band, and that silly guy was me."

Astrid Spirig (both singer / songwriter for Neon and later on LiLiPUT) was involved with FBB. She was involved in a subgroup that dealt with the topic of male doctors and gynecology. Around this time, she also worked as a copy editor at a daily newspaper. After she got a new supervisor and having held a public talk for her FBB group, it was suggested to her to quit the job for dubious reasons. The union stepped up and the employer took back the redundancy. However, Astrid didn't want to continue to work at that place. At the same time, she was involved with the *Werkstatt schreibender Arbeiter* (Workshop of the Writing Workers). She says, "We wrote critical texts, printed, distributed, and sold them in the streets. In a sense, my involvement wasn't political but on a personal level." She continues, "To this day, it has always been about the fact that I can be myself and no confinements. Of course, others should be able to do that, too. The values of people are important and not the roles they are assigned to through the political system or communities—however positive this message may appear. This is still important to this day, I realized....The question of whether something is authentic or led for whatever reasons. That's exactly what punk challenged."

PUNK

In December 1976, the first punk club—the Hey, next to Bellevue in Zürich—opened in Switzerland. The first show at Hey was on May 18, 1977 with the first punk band Nasal Boys playing under the same name, 1001, Stick Of the One Day Kick. Shortly after that, another show happened at Brockenhalle Patrick. Marlene Marder, who, of course, would get famous later on with her

NASAL BOYS *feat. Marlene Marder*

band Kleenex, was there on saxophone and Hermann "Marco" Ritter was their singer. Loredana Zandonella—Neon's bass player—was also part of the original punk scene in Zürich and attended those two gigs. She and Dagmar lived across the road near Häring Street in Niederdorf (a neighborhood of Zürich) and they knew each other from Züri Bar and Kontiki (two local pubs). In these bars, the art and music scene of the city met. The women of Kleenex were also part of this scene. On March 29, 1978, they played their first concert at Club Hey with male guitarists Rudolph Dietrich of Nasal Boys and Gogi Meier of Troppo.

THE FORMATION OF NEON

In July 1978, Kleenex played a small, open air show at Näglihof in Niederdorf. Among the audience members was Gitta Gsell (Neon's drummer) along with Astrid, who both lived together in a shared flat. The concert blew their minds. It was less because of the new punk direction but because of the authentic, sassy free spirit that members of Kleenex carried. Gitta mentioned to Astrid that they could do something like that themselves, combined with performance art. Gitta introduced Astrid to Dagmar who in turn introduced them to Loredana. Gitta and Astrid knew each other from a place called KV (Kaufmännischer Verband). At this point, Gitta had enrolled at the F+F School for Art and Media Design in Zürich.

F+F Schule had been co-founded in 1971 by Doris Stauffer who had also been the co-founder of FBB. A bit later on, in the early '80s, Dagmar, Muda Mathis (later of Les Reins Prochaines), and Stephan Eicher attended F+F. Gitta comments, "Experimental Design led to photography and performance art. In the spirit of the punk movement, I created a Survival Collection. It consisted of wearable plastic and waste products. The performances—some of them were spontaneous, other ones were rehearsed—also featured music and noise. For us, it used to be about crossing lines, trying something out, experimenting. The city was littered with prohibition signs so we wanted to make sure to wake up people, inciting movement in all sorts of directions. We wanted to do this in an artistic, loud and provocative way. We didn't want to conform to the pre-existing system but we wanted to look for something new." She continues, "I think none of us were able to read music or were able to play an instrument. However, there was a general good will from people and they supported us. Someone gave me a little drumkit for free. Some musicians gave me a handful of lessons. I used to practice moving my hands in a different rhythm than my feet on the bus and on the tram."

After four months of practice, the band had written six songs. Their first gig happened on November 1, 1978 at Club Hey—where else? They played the songs twice in a row to fill a set. Their band name inspired them to smear glow-in-the-dark liquid—normally used for diving—

NEON live

into their hair. Gitta still remembers that the liquid ran into her eyes and burned her eyes during the first song. Also, her drum kit fell apart during the show and had to be put back together, but this wasn't considered a problem by both the band and the audience. The band was surprised that they were able to have built a little fanbase with the few songs they had. Another gig with the group Hertz on November 17th brought them to Club Spex in Bern. In the beginning, the band had planned to make a Super 8 film about vacation in a metro station called "Neon Sun and Neon Fun." This film was supposed to accompany the live set along with neon pieces of art strewn all over the stage. However, things were moving so quickly that there only was a light in the end, an installation with neon lights.

NEON BREAKING UP

In December, the band had the aforementioned appearance on Swiss television. After this painful event, they decided to not play gigs for a while. During this break, they practiced with new musicians which resulted in a temporary new bass player. In 1979, two gigs happened at POCH events (Progressive Organisationen der Schweiz, a leftist political party) in Zürich on March 17th (at Limmathaus) and on Helvetiaplatz on July 14th, with TNT. The latter gig was an open air concert. It was also their last one. At the end of the year, Gitta left Switzerland and—just like a few other people from the punk scene—migrated to NYC (other holy destinations of the time were London, Paris, Berlin, and Amsterdam). She says, "I had the feeling if I had stayed longer in Switzerland my energy and creativity would have suffocated. After graduating from F+F, I really wanted to continue experimenting and be a practicing artist." She first completed a BFA at the School of Visual Arts in NYC and then finished an MFA in Combined Media at Hunter College. At the same time as this, she also wrote screenplays and directed films and videos. Dagmar followed in her footsteps and emerged in NYC two years later, where she also enrolled in the School of Visual Arts. They lost touch with Loredana, who would eventually settle down in Amsterdam by 1987. Things went different for Astrid who was still part of the Swiss scene and played with several bands after Neon split up. In the beginning of 1980, Klaudia Schiff of LiliPUT approached her, as Klaudia's band was looking for a new singer. Astrid remembers, "I was extremely nervous, as they were *the* band for me. I had no idea how they approached songwriting or whether my subpar English skills would be a problem. After a sleepless night, I met with Marlene and Klaudia at their rehearsal space. I tried to sing along to 'Hedi's Head' with mixed results. Marlene stopped and went, 'Let's just play something!' She strummed the guitar and Klaudia's bass rumbled along. I joined in with some gibberish and it turned into a song. Just like it had worked out for Neon."

GITTA *singing, October 10, 1979*

OVER AND OUT

The following statement by Gitta about the punk years boils it down: "What looked dangerously punky from the outside, was unbelievably peaceful on the inside. Experimentation was appreciated. A feeling of solidarity, of departure, of strength and courage. We didn't look for perfection—we were looking for expression and energy. Back then, this was a survival strategy in a world hostile, cold, and regimented to us. However, this was definitely over for different reasons by the end of the 1970s. The punk revolution, those three chords, and the shouted 'Fuck the system' or 'No future'"—all of this was lapped up by the music industry and the media which would then be marketed and sold out completely. Hardly anybody could or wanted to take part in this. The fate of those that were still taking part in it had already been sealed. So, everyone who still wanted to perform in front of their own audience needed to grown individually and musically."

Astrid mentions, "Around this time, the punk scene changed. 'Post-punk,' with new forms and sounds came to Zürich. At Rote Fabrik, the art and the music scene met and grow closer together. Bands were allowed to play a quiet song once in awhile. I remember the harsh criticism from the punk scene. We were occasionally labelled fashion punks, which wasn't a problem for me, personally. Actually, I felt right part of it, in the middle of this change." In the long run she would be right. The uniformed, ever standing still, indoctrinated punk characters ended up where they had come from—in a boring and conservative environment where nostalgia is celebrated.

IN THE SPIRIT OF PUNK

Another important reason was to do with movements. From Friday, May 30, 1980 (which was the night of the first Opernhauskravall in Zürich; a demonstration that turned into a riot demanding autonomous spaces), people vehemently fought for well over a decade for cultural spaces and visions for a better world in many Swiss towns and cities. The emergence of these spaces from conservative, sleepy places to open, vibrating meeting places cannot be demonstrated in a better way than with the music of that era. The music that was created as a logical step from punk or in the vicinity of it. As Marlene of Kleenex put it in an interview in 2010, "Actually, we would have like to have been an all-female band forever."

Astrid continued singing in LiLiPUT up to their last concert at Zürich's Mascotte Club in October 1983. After that, she turned to the Art of Life and works as a spiritual consultant these days. Loredana recently died on April 22nd 2017 in Amsterdam. Gitta lived in New York for 10 years and returned to Zürich in 1990, where she continues to work as a film director. Dagmar returned to Zürich after some time abroad and is dedicated to art in the form of words and image.

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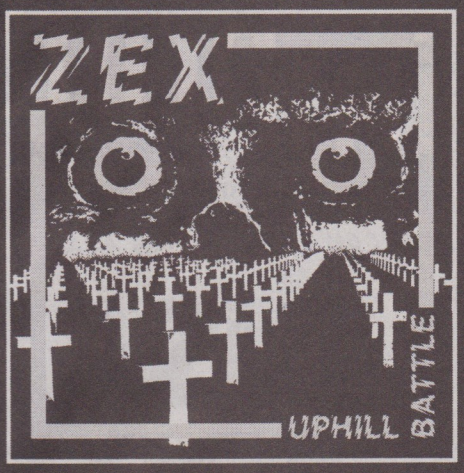

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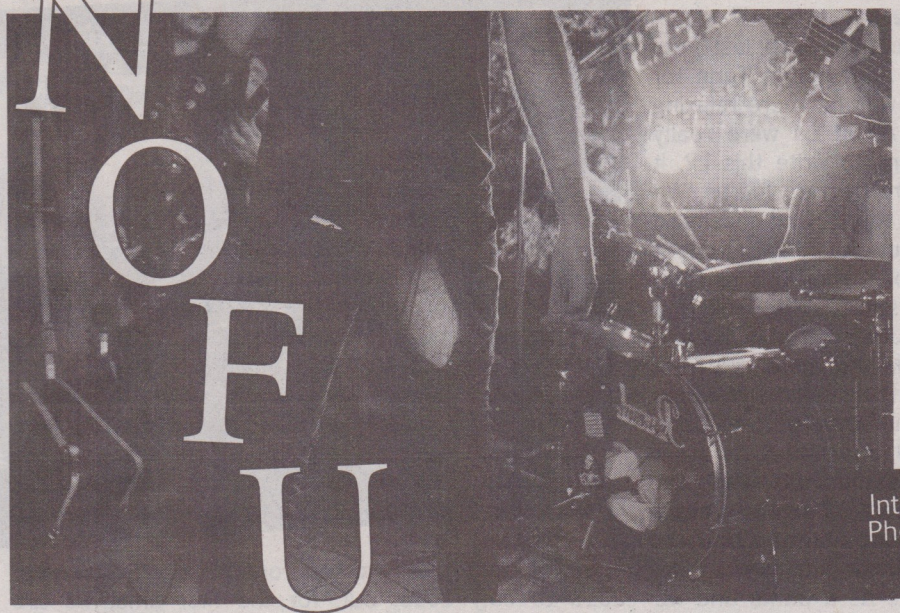


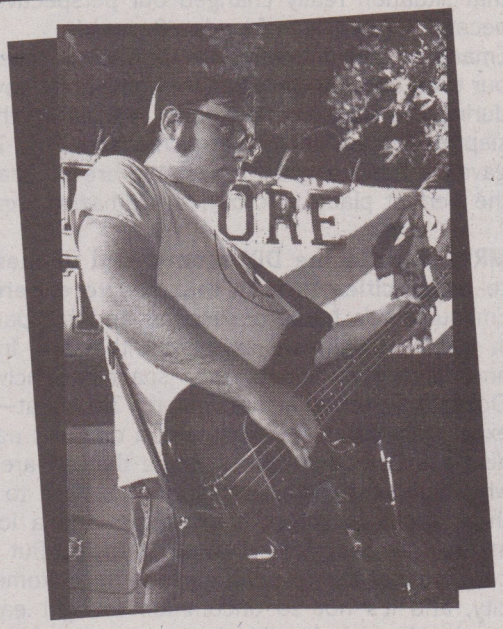
Nofu is a hardcore band founded in Rome, Italy in 2011, and inspired by groups such as Negazione and Raw Power from the '80s Italian hardcore scene. They will be touring the US South in early September 2017 to promote their new full-length LP Interruzione, *with tapes available for US purchase through Reality Records. You can find their tour schedule at the end of this interview—don't miss them! They will blow your minds, burst your eardrums, and possibly make you a delightful cacio e pepe.*

Interview and introduction by Ollie Hyle. Photos provided by Michela Midossi and Francesca Nana di Santo.

MRR: How has the punk scene changed in Italy in the last decade?
Emanuele: I really don't think I could answer clearly and objectively, because ten years ago I was eighteen and everything seemed thrilling and exciting to me. For sure the world has completely changed in the last ten years, and, as every cultural phenomenon, punk has deeply reflected this kind of change. Now everything is spread through Facebook and Youtube; everything tends to become "spectacle" (in the Guy Debord meaning, where "all that once was directly lived, has become mere representation"). I could say that I see more apathy and shallowness in the punk scene, too. More and more people organize and put together shows just for the glory and the Facebook likes. Ten years ago, I saw more commitment and passion. Obviously, this constitutes a sad trend, but there are still people who keep making efforts to create something different, spreading self-management, self-government, and supporting political prisoners and actions, economically and morally.

MRR: Do you think touring overseas is a major goal for any band? What are your expectations and fears of the States?
Emanuele: I don't think touring overseas is or should be the major goal for a band. We are just deeply excited to share our music, emotions, and lyrics with people living so far away—geographically and culturally—from us. Furthermore, every one of us, grew up with a sort of "American dream"—it's rooted in our imagination and embedded in our souls! We are crazy for US punk and hardcore, and going further back, for the soul music of the southern region, and also country and blues (not to mention the best American literature, from Hawthorne to Melville, Hemingway to Steinbeck, Faulkner, and Philip K. Dick). That's also why we have chosen to visit and play in the southern states of the US. Our hope is to find people interested and receptive to our stuff and who we are as people. Our major fears are facing problems with police and dealing with the healthcare system!!

MRR: What has been your most embarrassing moment on stage? What is your best memory together as a band?
Bitto: I can speak for myself. My most embarrassing moment on stage has been in a TAZ (temporary autonomous zone) in Saronno, in northern Italy. The day before we were playing in a fest in Tuscany (in the center of Italy) and it was a pool party, lots of friends and many, many beers. I got completely wasted. The day after in Saronno we were scheduled to play at 2:00 pm but as it frequently happens we finally played at 5:00 pm. I tried my best to avoid beers and joints but in the end I was not so strong. When we finally played I was so stoned that I couldn't understand a single note. From that day I realized that there's no sense in jumping in a van to play many kilometers away from home and do a shitty show just because you couldn't avoid getting wasted before playing. It's a matter of being respectful to the people you are playing with and to the people who are watching the show (even though they probably don't give a shit). I am not that skilled.

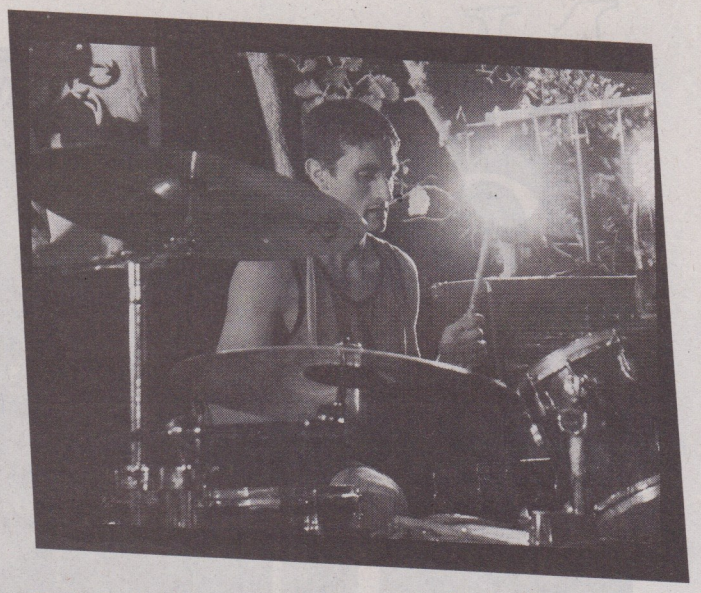


Emanuele: The most embarrassing moment that I had on stage was in Milan, about two years ago. We were playing the melancholic guitar intro of "Lo spirito continua" by Negazione as a cover, and our crazy drummer Gianluca started hitting me with a t-shirt, while he was laughing. Nobody knows why, he just thought it was funny. I was completely mortified.

MRR: What is your best memory together as a band?
Bitto: I think the best moment we've had together was last year during the *Interruzione* recordings. We lived together in Turin for one week hosted by the Barocchio squat. It was far more relaxing than being stuck in a van for one week. All of us were really focused on recording, we really worked hard to write this LP. It was great, and within that week many doors opened for us. We met Tino Paratore (the guy who recorded, mixed and mastered the LP) who told us a lot of stories about the '90s hardcore scene in Torino and Italy. Giovanni (Confusione, Flic Dans la Tete) jumped in the studio to sing one of our songs and booked a show for us. At the show we met Kobra Killer, a totally insane rap duo who combine rap with classic rock and metal. We met new friends like Alina (who runs a show on the local DIY radio, *Radio Black Out*, who told us that if she only knew before it she could've done a radio interview that week) and met guys from Scatti Vorticosi Records (who recorded a beautiful DIY video for us). Last but not least, we lived as a real family, together every second of the day. Again, it was different than being on tour, as everything was less loud and chaotic and more intimate. I think that situation really changed our perspective as a band, and we became even closer friends afterwards.
Emanuele: The moments in Turin were incredible. Far away from our town and our daily life, we completely dove into the recordings during the day, and we hung out during the night. Also, we all slept together in the Barocchio squat in Turin, the place that gave us hospitality and help! We are so grateful to them, it was the perfect place to crown this amazing experience!

MRR: How do the DIY scenes and venues of Rome compare to other cities in Italy that you've experienced?
Emanuele: It's hard to describe and compare the situation here in Rome. Usually we organize within and frequent the anarchist and libertarian squats and spaces: Bencivenga squat, Ateneo Occupato, Torre Maura squat, Zk squat—the best places to experience creativity, punk, and a different way of living. There are also a lot of other places, some that we are not so close to, but where people organize gigs...so, it's hard to summarize! In Rome there are a lot of cool situations, and a lot of people involved in the—more or less—DIY punk scene. But at the same time, I couldn't say that everything is perfect. Rome is a big and tough city, and it's not so uncommon to fight each other, sometimes for deeply rooted political reasons, other times just for no reason at all. What we are trying to do by organizing the Breath Fest (our two-day DIY festival) (almost) every year is spread the DIY punk mentality of self-government and self-management. We are convinced that punk could have a strong political and ethical implication, if it would be neither just music nor just a political slogan. Punk should be the proof, proof that it is possible to live together and to organize our lifestyle in a radically different way. Therefore, it should be structurally bound with self-government and the do it yourself lifestyle. Compared with other Italian cities, I could say that in smaller cities people seem to be more united despite the political, ethical and musical differences. Those aspects alone are reason enough for not closing our own mental borders, and for us to overcome our dogmas and prejudices. I can safely say that in other cities there isn't the strong family mentality and territoriality that we have in Rome.

MRR: How long did it take you to realize your latest album, *Interruzione*? What are the major differences between this one and your past releases? Who are your major musical influences?
Emanuele: *Interruzione* has taken us a long time and so much



effort, I think we worked on it from November 2015 to July 2016. But, for the first time, we are completely satisfied with the result. It was thrilling for me to write and to sing lyrics over such an amazing musical base. We tried to take inspiration from '80s Italian hardcore punk—especially from the Turin scene and the surrounding area, Negazione, Upset Noise, Declino, Kina, Stinky Rats, Indigesti, Nerorgasmo, Frammenti—and to mix this legacy with the other American "traditions" we refer to—the Accüsed, Bl'ast, Hüsker Dü, the Offenders, Void above all—and the northern European ones—from Discharge to Anti Cimex. Concerning the lyrics, I always try to put myself over the ridge between the political questions and the personal implications. It's hard to say that *Interruzione* is a concept album, but for sure it's the second chapter and the continuation of our first LP *Mitociclicità*. If *Mitociclicità* tried to show how our capitalistic and spectacular societies deny everything different from them, and every possibility of making history—in the sense of creating something really new and unexpected—*Interruzione* tries to paint the fractures of our world, not to reform them, but, through these fractures and contradictions, stop this kind of world.

NOFU'S US TOUR

9.2: HOUSTON, TEXAS, Red Light at Springbok
9.3: NEW ORLEANS, LOUSIANA, Siberia
9.4: PENSACOLA, FLORIDA, Back Porch Lounge
9.5: TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA, house show
9.6: DOTHAN, ALABAMA, Plughouse Dothan
9.7: BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA, house show
9.8: ATHENS, GEORGIA, Go Bar
9.9: CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE, Sluggo's
9.10: NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE, Drkmttr
9.11: MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE, Growlers
9.12: LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS, House show
9.13: OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA, Warehouse B
9.14: DALLAS, TEXAS, Three Links

OURS TO LOSE: WHEN SQUATTERS BECAME HOMEOWNERS IN NEW YORK CITY

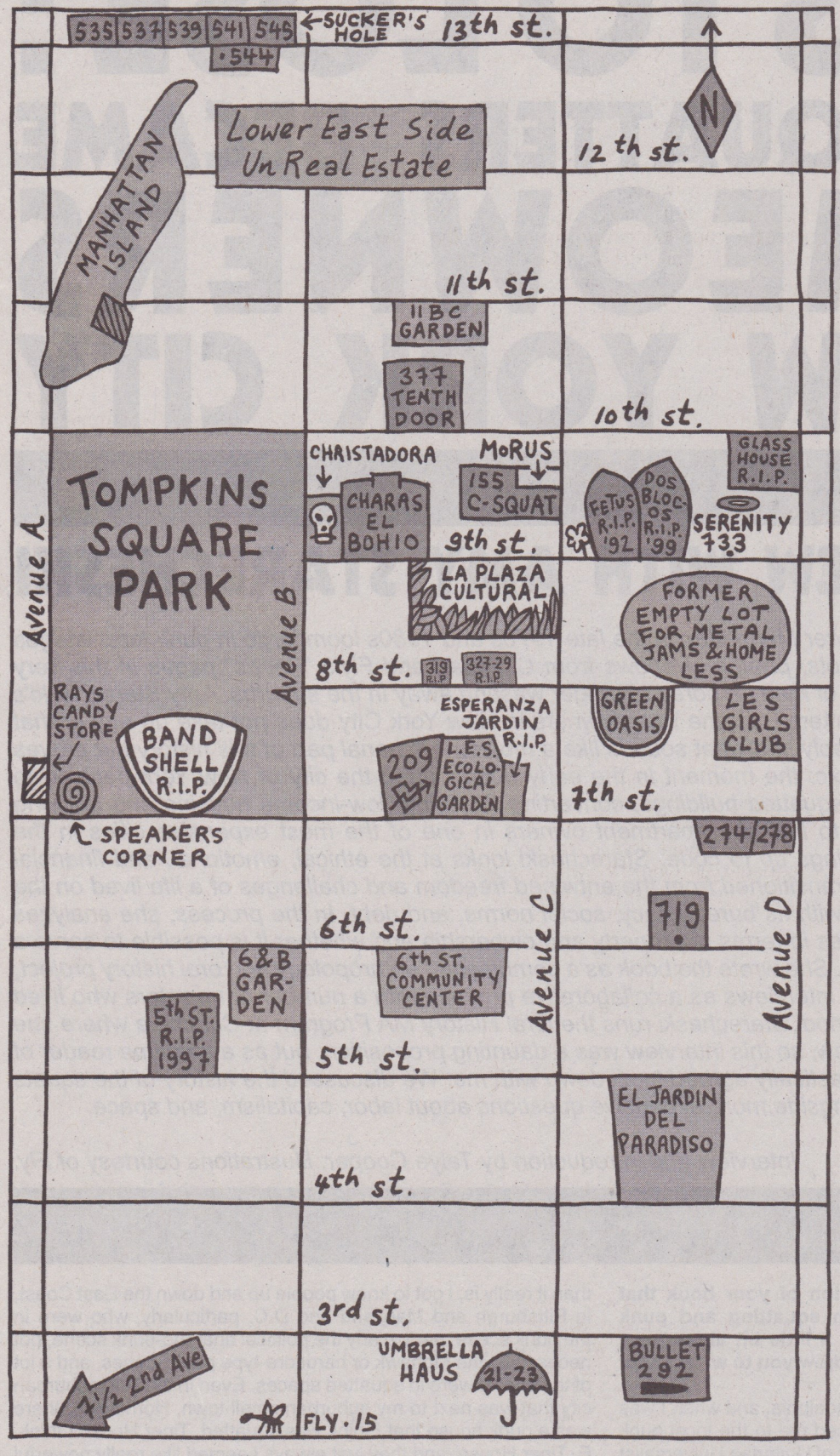
AN INTERVIEW WITH AMY STARECHESKI

The squats that sprang up in Lower Manhattan in the late 1970s and 1980s loom large in punk lore: images of the Tompkins Square Park riots, photos of shows from C Squat, and Fly's "Peops" pages in this very magazine spark the imagination of many a bored teenager wasting away in the suburbs. Amy Starecheski's book Ours To Lose: When Squatters Became Homeowners in New York City *does not take up any of that mythology. Instead, she digs deeply into what sounds like a much more banal part of this history but proves to be a rich and challenging topic: the moment in the early 2000s when the city of New York decided to legitimize several longstanding squatted buildings, converting them into low-income housing and allowing squatters to remain—and thus to become apartment owners in one of the most expensive cities in the world—if they brought the buildings up to code. Starecheski looks at the ethical, emotional, and financial issues squatters faced as they transitioned from the entwined freedom and challenges of a life lived on the margins into the straight world, with its bureaucracy, social norms, and debt. In the process, she analyzes how Americans define themselves in terms of property and ownership and whether it is possible to carve a life in this country on other terms. She wrote the book as a combination anthropology and oral history project, conducting long-form life history interviews as a collaborative process with a number of narrators who lived in the squats during this time period. Starecheski runs the Oral History MA Program at Columbia where she literally taught me how to interview, so this interview was a daunting proposition, but as a longtime reader of* Maximum Rocknroll *she enthusiastically agreed to sit down with me. We discussed the history of the squats and the legalization process alongside more expansive questions about labor, capitalism, and space.*

Interview and introduction by Talya Cooper. Illustrations courtesy of Fly.

MRR: You mention in the introduction of your book that you have personal experience with squatting and punk and.squatting culture—can you talk a little bit about your background with that and also what drew you to write about this topic?

I grew up in the suburbs outside of Philadelphia, and when I was in high school some older kids introduced me to the local punk scene and actually, through this network of Unitarian Universalist youth groups, which sounds both just as nerdy and even nerdier than it really is, I got to know people up and down the East Coast, in Pittsburgh and Maryland and D.C. particularly, who were in the punk scene, particularly the political anarcho-punk scene, not necessarily the Mohawk or hardcore-type punk scenes, and a lot of the shows were in squatted spaces. Even in the little suburban city that was next to my suburban small town, Norristown, there was a punk house that I think was squatted, Tiner House I think, E. Tiner House, and they just always seemed like really powerful and mysterious and magical places where things could happen



that couldn't happen in the regular world.

When I was living in New York City—I came here to go to college—I sort of sought out the New York parts of that scene and spent time at ABC No Rio and eventually got involved with some activist work around community gardens that was organized out of a squat in the Bronx called Casa del Sol, and the network of activists coming out of the squats on the LES. It made those spaces seem even more powerful and even more mysterious in a place like New York, that was wild in its own ways but (especially in terms of the real estate market) even more tightly controlled, that there were places that were temporarily outside of the housing market and outside of the building codes. New York has so many rules about everything and it was just amazing that there could be these places where there was no heat and there was no water and there was no electricity and people were living in them, full and complicated lives. So then when I was going to graduate school and getting ready to study cultural anthropology I was thinking "What's a question that has stuck with me, that I've never been able to answer?" and that was how spaces like this can exist and how people are able to claim them and hold onto them, how they make moral claims that other people take seriously, how they use physical force to hold onto them, and how that whole world of squats intersects with the straight world of the city.

MRR: The book focuses primarily on the process of the legalization of the squats. Can you talk a little about that specific process and also about why you decided to concentrate on that particular aspect of the history?

On the Lower East Side, there was a squatting movement that in some significant ways was trying to claim legal ownership of housing—people wanted to become homeowners. Plenty of other people were involved in it because they wanted to tear apart private property and create spaces outside of the system of private property, and I think partially because of that radical edge and the widespread willingness to use direct action to defend the spaces, to use barricades and booby traps and fight in the street and make a really big stink when people tried to evict them, the squatters were able to hold on to buildings

illegally for much longer than in any other neighborhood that I know of. Eventually, the city decided that they couldn't evict them, and they couldn't sell the buildings with squatters in them, and they didn't want to continue owning the buildings, so they made a deal. The city offered to sell the buildings for one dollar each to a nonprofit that would take out loans on the squatters' behalf and use that money to renovate the buildings and bring them up to code—alongside squatters working on their own—and once the buildings were legally inhabitable, the squatters would become limited equity low-income co-op owners.

I decided to study that process partly because it was an amazing opportunity to actually see how those two worlds that I was talking about intersect. How do people move from one to the other? What is it like to go from being a squatter to being a homeowner? It's a great opportunity to look at how the law shapes people's lives and also how people's lives exceed the boundaries of the law. Also, because I was in an anthropology program it was kind of incumbent upon me to study something that was taking place not just in the past, and there was a sense that at some point I had to be doing participant observation, which just means essentially hanging out with people, watching what they're doing, participating in it. That sort of pushed me to look at the legalization process and not just the history. But when I arrived on the Lower East Side and started talking to people about this project, I think most people definitely wished I was a historian and that I was there to write their history and were less excited about a project focusing on legalization.

MRR: There's a part of the book that I thought was really interesting in part because it relates to a lot of kind of debates right now in punk and DIY. It has to do with labor and the question of labor outside of capitalism, the way people value their labor when you're putting work into something because it's what you love and what is meaningful for you as opposed to working at something so you can pay your rent, pay your bills, blah blah blah. Can you talk a little bit about the different ways that the squatters you talked to conceived of the work that they did on the squats and as part of the legalization process? There are divergent views that they expressed that I thought were really interesting.

Like I said, there are people who came to this for really different reasons. There are people who just kind of wanted a place to crash and just did the bare minimum that they could on their spaces to be able to basically survive in them. People talked to me about literally putting up a tent in the middle of a wrecked room with no walls and windows and living in the tent, not even trying to put plastic over the windows. I think they were the minority. Most people were working for the long term and for the pleasure of it in some ways, that feeling of satisfaction of building something for yourself the way that you want it and not having to sell your labor for money to pay rent, like you said. I think anyone who's ever had the opportunity to live that way even partially would recognize that feeling of, even if you're working really hard, of freedom and self-determination. It's kind of funny to talk that way because these are people who in some ways would be seen as very un-free. They have no housing security in some ways; anyone could barge into their house at any minute and evict them.

We think of freedom in housing as freedom from having people bother you, that if you're a homeowner you have freedom and self-determination because there's no landlord ruling over you. These are people who had no landlord but also were vulnerable to the police, and the fire department, and child services coming in and hassling them about how they're raising their kids, but felt in many cases very, very free and that was because of how they were using their labor. It was really interesting to talk to people about how that changed or didn't change as they recognized that they were really going to own these buildings. During the period of illegal squatting, there was a sense partially of working in order to be able to make stronger claims on the building, whether those were claims to ownership or just to have a right to stay and not try to get legal title. One of the ways that we often think of property both in radical contexts and in capitalist contexts in the US is that you get rights to something by working on it. So the more squatters worked on these buildings, the more they would be seen as good people, moral people, deserving people, who had a right to actually claim this housing that belonged to the city and that they really had to fight for, both politically and physically.

As the legalization process became real, some people started really thinking of their labor more as an investment and as something that could be converted into cash. I think it's common to think that way even when there isn't the possibility of real cash involved. We're so used to thinking of our time in hourly increments and our time as being exchangeable for cash. I talked to one person who, even before the legalization deal was formalized said you know, I've calculated how much rent I'd be paying if I lived in a regular place, how many hours of work it would take me to pay that rent, and that's the number of hours that it was reasonable to put into my space every month. And this is not a person who's expecting to become a homeowner, just a person who's trying to calculate in his own mind whether it's worthwhile to do this labor or not. Squatters also did use hourly calculations to count if someone was working enough to be a good member of a building. Some of the more organized buildings even had logbooks keeping track of how much everybody worked, and it had to be not just on your own space but on collective areas. There was never a space that was entirely outside of the capitalist imaginary, even in contexts where people were largely removed from wage labor.

MRR: It's interesting to read about the way that people moved in and out of the mindset of being anti-state and thinking through the ways in which it became necessary for them to capitulate to the system—or not even capitulate, in some cases they just grew and changed over time. One figure who's kind of a ghost in your book is Michael Shenker. Through the narratives, you observe him going through a major transition over time. Can you talk about the role that he played, and also how the change he went through is in some ways emblematic of the politics that were involved in this situation?

It's a little bit hard for me to talk about him because Michael Shenker was one of the first people that I called when I was starting this research, and I called him and reached him in a hospital bed. He was dying, and he passed away before I got to really speak with him for this. So when I'm talking about what he thinks, I'm talking about what he said in public and I don't want to put words in his mouth or claim that I know what was going on inside his head. But he was a person who was a very outspoken activist among the squatters, a person who when you see photos of squatter rallies and demonstrations, there's a 90% chance that you're going to see Michael Shenker in the front row of any protest, mouth wide open, fist in the air, screaming and yelling, which is funny because he was a slight person with wispy strawberry blond hair and a lisp. But he was also really bold and strong and a really knowledgeable electrician which I think gave him a lot of power in that world, where people wanted to get electricity and wanted to turn to people who knew more than they did.

He was an outspoken advocate for squatting as a tool to develop low income housing and prevent displacement as the neighborhood was gentrifying. But as the legalization deal proceeded, he came out publicly and said that he thought the deal that squatters had originally agreed to, which would allow them to sell their apartments only for really low rates, say $20,000, something like that, was unfair, because they had worked really hard,

they had spent a lot of their own money and they had no safety net in their world to be able to retire or move somewhere else. He and a lot of other people felt really trapped—people who had spent their entire adult lives in this world, not gaining marketable skills, not saving for retirement, not networking, not getting used to working full-time (even though there were plenty of people in the squats who did work full-time and did all those things) and investing in this housing that was not exchangeable on the market, so if they wanted to move they would be starting basically from zero.

He started arguing that they should be able to sell for much higher amounts. Being able to sell your apartment for $100,000 or maybe $150,000 would be enough that you could start over somewhere else, you could move, you could get back some of what you'd invested in terms of time and money. And that was incredibly shocking to some people who had been in this movement alongside him for decades, thinking they were all fighting for the same thing. And they had been fighting for the same thing, but he had a different idea about how to balance individual well-being and collective well-being. The increasing precarity that I think people experience in our society when there's just so little institutional and government support for people who need food and money and shelter and health care and the basic things that we all need makes it hard for individuals to make a decision to give up their own capacity to get economic security in order to provide that security for other people, other people that they don't even know. So that was a conversation that took years to resolve inside the squatting community, and they did eventually raise the resale caps to around $100–120,000 and actually raised the amount of money that people buying apartments in the buildings now can make, so they can now make 120% of the area median income, which depending on how you look at it, is more middle class then poor or working class. That was a compromise that the squatters and their nonprofit advocates and their government representatives arrived at to try to find some way that they could get some security individually and the housing could not completely revert to the market.

One thing that I found in doing the research for the book, and I knew some of this but it was really clearly articulated, is that in the '70s and '80s, and maybe even early '90s on the Lower East Side, there was a vision of creating an entirely cooperative economy, that there would be community-owned land and community-owned housing and community-owned businesses, co-ops, credit unions, that could allow people to support each other in infrastructural ways and I think that's part of what some of the squatters were buying into. Bits and pieces of that came to fruition, but it didn't come to fruition as an entire ecosystem of collectives and cooperatives and I think that's part of what people like Michael Shenker were reacting to, that there was this sense that they had worked really hard and the thing that they had been working for hadn't totally happened and they were kind of stuck.

MRR: Obviously, they were building this ecosystem but they were coming into a neighborhood where there were existing populations and communities, and there was some tension there in terms not just of race and class but also the way that the race and class of the squatters was perceived and portrayed in the media and depicted from the outside. There are a couple things I'm interested in—the reality of the race and class dynamic as it played out on the ground, and also how the squatters now see themselves as part of this long history of the gentrification of the Lower East Side, which is now a wealthy high-end kind of place.

So, squatters when they were coming from the outside into the Lower East Side were coming into a neighborhood that was changing a lot—as all neighborhoods always are. So I think it's important to keep in mind that there's no such thing as a static neighborhood that never changes. The Lower East Side was coming out of a long period of disinvestment, abandonment, arson, and white flight, which had left it a predominantly Latino neighborhood. I just saw some research that stated it was 68% Latino in the late 1970s and early 1980s. A lot of squatters were white or of other racial backgrounds and weren't from that neighborhood. So that was a problem when they were claiming city-owned property in a neighborhood that was just coming out of this period of disinvestment and starting to gentrify. It made it harder for them to make moral claims on the building because the people who were left in that neighborhood and had stuck it out through the hard period were saying "If this is the people's housing then the people is us," and the squatters were saying "The people is everyone who lives in this city, we're part of the people and we can claim it."

Because that discourse was part of how the public realm conversation about the squatters happened, it was a really easy way for their enemies to attack them, to say "Oh these are white people from outside" and everyone would immediately know what that means and it would strip them of a lot of their moral value. But the squatters weren't all white at all. They were pretty mixed. They were whiter than the people who were there before them. A lot of them were people of color from outside of the neighborhood. There was a building that had a lot of Black people from Philly in it. There was a building that had a lot of Colombian people in it. So they were a pretty mixed-up bunch but they weren't mostly Latinos from the Lower East Side. Sometimes they had really close working relationships with Latino-led organizations from the neighborhood. A lot of the squatters were part of other radical and even mainstream housing organizations in the neighborhood and there were ways in which squatters' desires were really allied with those of people who were trying to prevent further displacement in the neighborhood.

MRR: How, if at all, do squatters see themselves as having contributed or not contributed to the gentrification of the Lower East Side?

The answer to that question is part of a bigger conversation about the role of artists and bohemians and people who are part of subcultures in general in gentrification. I've seen a convincing argument that the overall role of squatters on the Lower East Side, as a very particular single subcultural group, was to slow gentrification, because of their willingness to use direct action and not what I would necessarily call violence, but physical confrontation to defend themselves. It made the neighborhood seem too crazy to be gentrified, particularly the riots in Tompkins Square Park and the ongoing police actions on 13th Street in the mid-1990s. Those are things that are not marketable, are not cute. They're scary to people who aren't part of them, and I think may have made the neighborhood less attractive to really wealthy people looking for a palatable art scene.

At the same time, particularly around race, whenever there are white faces in a gentrifying neighborhood, just having those people walking around makes the neighborhood look more palatable to other white people. Squatters did preserve and slowly (and according to different kinds of aesthetics) beautify buildings that would have otherwise been abandoned and presumably less attractive. They were involved in community gardening, and community gardens are certainly much more marketable than riots for real estate agents trying to sell an up-and-coming neighborhood.

Now, the squatters are the old-timers. They are no longer the newcomers to this neighborhood, The people that I interviewed, many of them were in their 50s, 60s, 70s, are aging and have families and are by far sort of outclassed by the actual newcomers to that neighborhood. One of the things that I found is that squatters are actively involved in preserving and documenting and sharing their stories, and I think part of that is about that feeling of now being part of the

history of the neighborhood and being part of a long history of resistance and radical social movement history on the Lower East Side, and trying to figure out what is their place in the neighborhood now that they're homeowners in this really unusual way, and their favorite businesses and hangouts are changing, and if they didn't own their housing they'd be at risk of displacement too now. It's an interesting turnaround that they were initially maligned for being newcomers and now they're the old-timers in the neighborhood.

MRR: You mentioned 13th Street and that was really a key flashpoint for a lot of the case around legalization. Can you tell the story of the buildings on 13th Street and what happened there?

The Lower East Side, for people who haven't spent time there, is a really small part of the city. The part of it where most of the squats were, it's like between Houston and 14th Street which is maybe ¾ of a mile tall, between Avenue A and Avenue D, maybe half a mile wide, so this is less than a square mile of space. Even within that dense little area, there were some places where there were really dense concentrations of squats, and East 13th Street between Avenue A and Avenue B was one of those. There were six squats on that block, five on one side of the street and one on the other, and the ones on the one side of the street were all pretty much right next to each other. It was a block that had a blacksmith's forge on it, that had spaces for art and performance, that had communal kitchens, that had print shops, that had feminist theater companies, that was really a space that was not just about providing housing but was a real hotbed of DIY cultural production. I never hung out on that block before the evictions happened but it sounds like it was really crazy and lively and a place where squatters just were visible. The buildings were [initially squatted] in the mid 1980s, and in the mid 1990s, just when they'd been squatted for ten years, they were transferred to a nonprofit to be turned into low-income housing using a tax credit subsidy kind of scheme, which is how we see a lot of so-called low-income housing being developed in New York City now.

Squatters organized pretty quickly to resist that and one tactic that they used was making an adverse possession claim, which is something that I'd been hearing about in the world of squats for the whole time that I'd been associated with it. It's one of the few times that a group of urban squatters in New York City has actually made this claim, which is that if you occupy something openly, exclusively, notoriously, continuously, and under claim of right for ten years—

MRR: [*laughter*] You've never said that before!

I even knew those rules before I even started doing this research! It's something any squatter who's thinking strategically at all would know. So if you've been doing that for ten years, you can bring a lawsuit that says that the building's owner abandoned it, now it's essentially mine, and actually just get it, like actually just own it straight out. So the squatters on East 13th Street organized to make an adverse possession claim and came really close to winning. They were evicted on sort of a technicality before the case was finally decided, but in the meantime the judge had said that it was actually pretty likely that they would succeed in making this case.

When they were finally evicted it was pretty dramatic. When people in the city think of squats and squatters I think they often think of the image of a tank rolling down 13th Street to do this eviction, partially because there were so many buildings. I think that squatters throughout the area realized that how this case went could determine how it went for the rest of them, so a lot of people came out for the defense. The block had to be closed off for months. Anyone who lived on the block had to show ID to an officer on the corner, closed off to that extent. Nobody liked that, right? Squatters didn't like that, regular people didn't like it, it was really bad publicity. The biggest eviction was in May of 1995. On July 4, 1995, while the police were busy monitoring the fireworks crowd over by the East River, squatters broke back into the building, took it over again, were parading around on the roof being really dramatic, really embarrassed the city, had to be evicted all over again, and I think all of that drama and expense and that near court win was part of what pushed the city to make a deal with the buildings that were left.

MRR: It's really interesting to read about this particular history, but it's also a little bit sad because the way that New York is now makes it essentially non-squattable at this point. You raise the question at the beginning of your book "Is it possible to create a space outside of capitalism?" and I think ultimately you conclude that the squats were that, if only to some extent. Thinking about New York how it is now, where do you see possibilities for a space outside of capitalism?

I think one area where there's a big push now is around community land trusts and the idea of trying to remove land from the market not for individual ownership but for collective control and giving people in neighborhoods some way of collectively making decisions about land use. And then there is still some squatting that happens in New York. It's more at the edges of the outer boroughs, it's in single-family homes, it's pretty secretive, no one is hanging a banner outside. But sometimes it lasts for longer than you would expect and sometimes it's pretty successful. In the aftermath of the 2008 foreclosure crisis there was an opportunity for that kind of squatting. And there are still vacant spaces and people still take them and use them. But you're right that the depth and the extent of gentrification right now is just really astounding and it makes it hard to imagine spaces that are outside of capitalism.

There are still free stores and clothing swaps and all of these little DIY spaces and family spaces and spaces of friendship where people are still taking care of each other and doing things because they love them and not for money, and so to me those continue to be seeds of possibility for other ways of organizing ourselves and our time.

One thing that I find really important and interesting in thinking through this story is how people in the squats oftentimes talked about themselves and thought about themselves as being part of a family, not a biological family but a family that they had chosen and built up, and the fact that they shared houses was part of what made them a family. I think that in our interpersonal relationships with each other, we're often living outside of capitalism in significant ways. When a parent is taking care of a child, they're not counting the hours they're investing, they're not expecting to get any money back for that labor. When people are bringing food to a potluck, when people are enjoying—I was gonna say public space but I don't want to get into public

space in New York right now!—but I think part of what makes this story exciting is that it shows us that these spaces, even when they're really small, are really important and they can be a seed from which other things can grow. I think in a lot of ways, anti-capitalist spaces in New York City have been driven into really small and intimate environments. There are still free stores and clothing swaps and all of these little DIY spaces and family spaces and spaces of friendship where people are still taking care of each other and doing things because they love them and not for money, and so to me those continue to be seeds of possibility for other ways of organizing ourselves and our time.

MRR: It's both a question of physical space and psychological space. You talk about the concept of the family and also you also refer a lot to the concept of the "ladder of life" where there's this idea that in America you're instilled with this sense that you go to school and you get married and you have kids and you buy a house and this is how you chart your success as a human being, essentially, in our country, and there are ways in which you saw that being pushed back against but also ways in which you saw that still being present in people's minds. Can you talk about that a little bit?

It's interesting because I think life in New York in a lot of ways generally subverts the ladder of life, if you think of the ladder of life as something that prototypically happens in the suburbs because people in New York don't typically become homeowners, they are much more likely not to have children or have children really late or only have one child, so I think there's a lot of possibility here already for thinking of ways to measure our success as human beings. Unfortunately that means a lot of people just measure their success as human being in terms of their professional success, which has its own problems. [*laughter*]

One of the things that's challenging about these kinds of limited equity forms of homeownership is that in a way it seems like you're moving up on the ladder of life and doing the thing you're supposed to be doing but you're not getting that capacity necessarily for economic mobility that we imagine to come with homeownership. If you look at the statistics over time in the US, homeownership is not really a path to social mobility but we all still imagine it to be. I think that's part of what made it hard for squatters to think about what this meant for their lives because it seemed like "Oh, you're becoming homeowners, something should be different in your life," or you should get some future reward. It's hard to think about what homeownership means without that.

MRR: I just want to ask a couple last questions about the process by which you wrote the book and also just think a little more about documentation. The kind of documentation that squatters did of their lives, and continue to do, is part of the same lineage that *MRR* belongs to which is this sort of obsessive compulsive self-documentation that you see in radical communities. Why do you think that we're so driven to archive ourselves?

That's one of the questions that I came out of this project really not quite being able to answer because it is so striking and it seems so particular to this world. For the squatters, a lot of the drive towards documentation started with those initial challenges to their legitimacy, so a lot of it came from them documenting their work, so they wanted to say "Look at these before and after pictures, look a these logbooks of work, look at these receipts, look how hard we worked. We're not freeloaders and we're not lazy and we're not asking for something for nothing, we have a right to these spaces because we worked hard for them." That's something that I think is unique to that world.

I think as we were just discussing, there's really this powerful drive in our society to value people and their lives in terms of certain forms of achievement, and when you're deeply involved in a subcultural world, oftentimes you're not achieving those kinds of things, and it's easy to feel invisible, feel devalued I think. The documentation can be a way to sort of—and some of this thinking is coming from conversations I had with Fly, who's an artist and a really important documenter of this community—who talked to me about the idea of how some of this documentation is just showing that this is a legitimate life to lead, that this really happened, that it should be taken seriously, that it's valuable, and that these worlds are important. Subcultural worlds feel so fragile, especially in a place like New York City today. They're so powerful and so fragile at the same time, and I think the drive to document comes partially from that tension, that we who've been part of them feel that power and also feel that fragility, and we want to document the power and protect against the fragility. And you know, you can't go to school for this stuff. It's also a way to pass on knowledge from one generation to another so that every kid who enters the scene doesn't have to start from nothing. I talked to someone who said that when they were coming to New York and started wanting to learn how to squat, they literally went to the zine library at ABC No Rio and read all of *World War III Illustrated* and read all of Fly's zines and said "This is how I'm going to learn about how to squat and the history of squatting on the Lower East Side," and it's pretty amazing that the documentation can work to amplify the changes that are happening on a small scale in DIY scenes.

Subcultural worlds feel so fragile. They're so powerful and so fragile at the same time, and I think the drive to document comes partially from that tension, that we who've been part of them feel that power and also feel that fragility, and we want to document the power and protect against the fragility.

MRR: Do you see your choice to do oral history, which is more of a collaboration between yourself and the narrator than a traditional ethnography, to be part of the same lineage of DIY documentation? If not, how it is different?

I do. It's both the same and different. In an oral history interview, we're not asking someone to tell us their stories that we then go and make sense of as the experts. We're asking people to collaborate with us to create their stories in that moment and to have a conversation about what they mean and do that work of analysis. That idea that everyone has theories about their lives and everyone has the skills and capacity to make sense of their own experience I think is a really DIY approach to history-making. At the same time, part of what I value and what part of the people I was working with value about oral history is its capacity to get a very traditional kind of legitimacy. The oral histories that I recorded are all archived in the Tamiment Archives at NYU which is a radical history library; they're part of a university-based professional historical collection now, and that can provide a kind of legitimacy that might not otherwise be available for these stories. That's a kind of not necessarily DIY

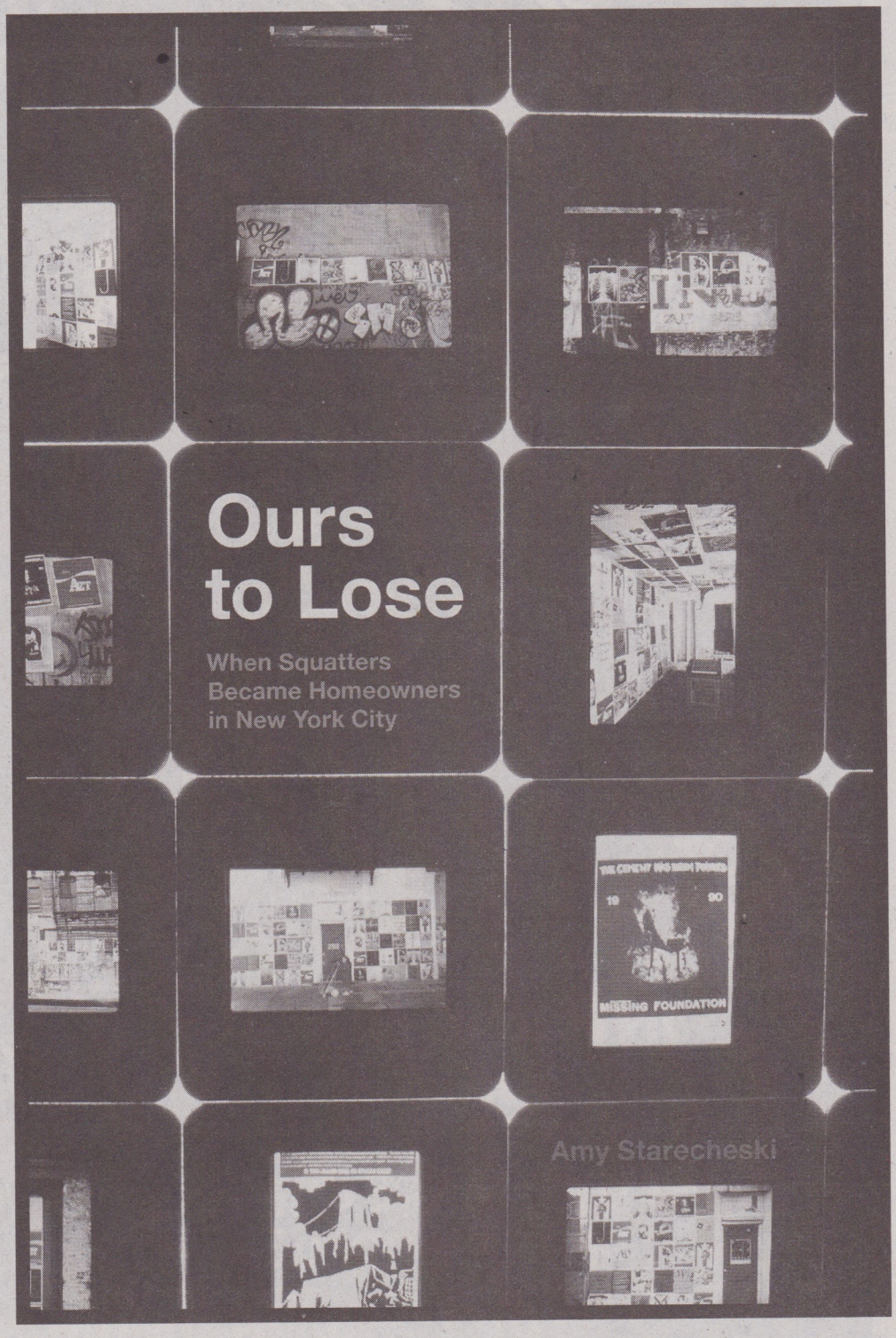
but like a bootstrapping form of history. Oral history is a great way for regular people to give their stories the power that they deserve, to speak in public. It takes private stories and private conversations and private experiences and turns them into something that can be discussed in public, and that's something that I think is often not the intention of DIY cultural production.

MRR: Is there anything else that you wanted to add?

The only thing I would add is that one of the ways that squatters were maligned was calling them punks and associating them with a certain kind of nihilistic punk rock subculture. I just want to underline how a big part of what I found in doing this research was how important the skills and tools and knowledge and dispositions of DIY punk were to making this world, even to people who didn't come from that world, who weren't involved in it. The idea that anyone can start their own pirate radio station, that anyone can produce their own newspapers or their own media, or their own forms of discourse, that people can self-organize to make the worlds that they want to live in, came from European anarchists and Latin American freedom fighters and local Latino activists, but also in a really significant way came from DIY punk into this world. I think that's something that hasn't been really highlighted in the way this story has been told before, because there's this sense that punk is something bad and it's something that's not building anything, that's just about tearing things down, and I think this whole story is a great example of how certain kinds of punk cultures have incredible capacities to build worlds that are complicated but also powerful and magical and special and really, really important.

***Ours To Lose: When Squatters Became Homeowners in New York City* is available from the University of Chicago Press.**

Certain kinds of punk cultures have incredible capacities to build worlds that are complicated but also powerful and magical and special and really, really important.



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LOS IMPUESTOS

I sat down with Guatemala City's Los Impuestos one evening before their rehearsal for an upcoming gig. They described in some detail the origins of their approach to hardcore and their unique experience as a band within Central America. With members stemming from earlier local Guatemalan bands such as Fuerza X, Neurotoxico, and Volver, Los Impuestos foment a diverse, heavy flavor profile of powerviolence and skate thrash with some top notes of black metal and even a slight hint of hip-hop. Amidst plenty of jokes and banter, they had an interesting story to tell.

Introduction and interview by Andrew Rosenweig. Photos provided by Airwave Photography..

MRR: For the non-Spanish speakers, what does Los Impuestos mean?

Chato: So, Los Impuestos means "The Taxes" and we pretty much got the name because we're always bitching about paying taxes, working and getting stiffed all the time. But then it turned into a joke like we're this private entity that tries to dodge taxes. It eventually devolved into a depiction of the private sector as a cult of money-worship with capital as an avatar of Satan. So, that's pretty much what the lyrics are about; they're fuckin' ridiculous.

MRR: Can you introduce yourselves, your role in the band, and your day job?

Expectativa: I play the drums. And my day job: I think I kinda run an import and distribution company.
Chato: Kinda?
Expectativa: Kinda. And I also work in energy.
Kumi: I play guitar and work in a bank.
Chang: I run my own business, which is a restaurant.
Chato: I'm the vocalist and I work in a marketing agency and I try to sell

shit to people. Terrible shit. I mean, I make people get fatter and shit. That's pretty much my job.
Gabo: I do video production during the week and on the weekends I have a burger business. So, I also make people get fatter.

MRR: How did you all meet?
Chato: Expectativa and I met when we were like fourteen or fifteen or some shit like that. And uh…we uh…we fell in love. We fell in love. We've been fuckin' playing in terrible bands and great bands since we met each other. And we met through going to shows. Kumi and I met…actually we met at Boy Scouts when we were eleven or twelve. He went to school with my sister and he was the only guy that listened to decent music and it was metal. He wasn't even into punk or anything like that, but we still hung out. Chang, I met a long time ago but he was a Christian before, so I wouldn't talk to him. Then he lost his faith and we became real good buddies. I would see him at shows and he wouldn't have crosses on or all that Christian shit. So he was lots of fun to hang out with, and Gabo we've known for a minute cause he pretty much started coming to shows at a young age, he was playing in Neurotoxico at the time so we recruited him for our new project.

MRR: When and where did you form the band?
Chato: It was when I got my bass stolen. You remember?
Expectativa: Yeah. We were doing a previous band that was just Chato and myself.
Chato: Hijos de Atreus. We were playing this stonery fuckin'…well trying to play that shit at least. I went out partying one night and I left my bass, my pedals, and my computer in my car and I got fuckin' mugged. But we had the habit of jamming every Wednesday. So, then there was just this guitar that was left to play. And I really can't play guitar, much less I can't play slow guitar. So, we basically just started playing the shit we liked from back in the day and started recruiting [members] after that.

MRR: How would you describe your particular sound?
Chato: I think it sounds like...you know...comedy hour. It sounds like a goofy fuckin', punky.
Chang: Brewster!
Chato: Yeah. Punky Brewster-core.

MRR: What are your main musical influences?
Expectativa: I personally steal shit from the most random places. Phil Collins. A bunch of punk, hardcore, metal, whatever influences.
Chato: You know, there's a lot of early '90s powerviolence. Kumi, when he first started hanging out with us, didn't listen to punk at all. So, there's a lot of metal influence. It's got that charm with Chang, you know he likes that old…
Chang: Hardcore from the early '00s, when it became really melodic. So, that's pretty much what I bring to the band.
Chato: And you know, I used to like Septic Death, Siege, and all that shit when I was young.
Expectativa: Slap-A-Ham.
Chato: But really we like a lot of old punk bands. Void. I really like Void. And I steal a lot of riffs from '60s psych bands. I stole some shit from the Seeds, you know. Shamelessly. Just with a lot of distortion. And Broadcast, I've been mooching off those motherfuckers. Yeah, but I don't care because she's [*Ed.– Trish Keenan, vocalist of Broadcast*] dead, man. So, she's not going to sue me or anything.

MRR: Can you also explain the title of your EP *Donde Se Drogarán Los Niños?* How did you come up with that?
Expectativa: Chepe.
Chato: My friends from college that are more preppy just had a spoof with the Maná record *Donde Se Jugarán los Niños?* (Where are the children going to play?). My friend, Chepe, was like, "Aw, man, you should call it *Donde Se Drogarán los Niños?*" which means "where are the kids going to do drugs?" And the cover is an illustration of Richie Rich being served some heroin. So, it explains a lot about our band. Our lyrics are just making fun of whatever type of economic system they're trying to run here.

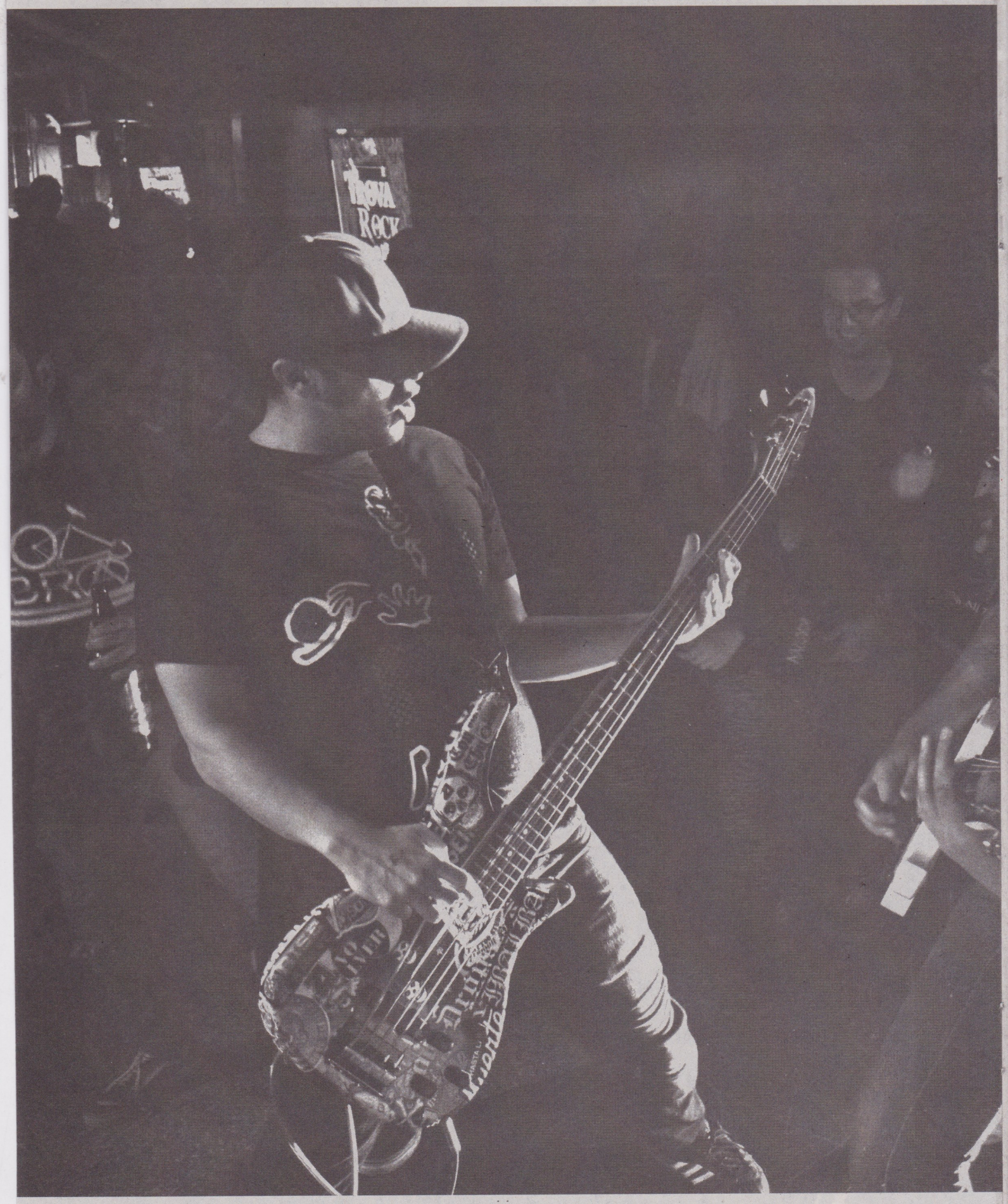
MRR: Do you channel any inspiration for your live performances?
Expectativa: I don't know. I just like to hit shit as hard as I can, really.
Chato: On my side, you know hardcore is all like…well not all of it… but you know, it's not really feminine. So, I try to dance and pretend I'm listening to some '80s synth goth-wave while I'm playing. So, it's definitely like I'm channeling this very feminine persona, whatever you try to call it. It's pretty androgynous.

MRR: What do your parents say about your music?
Expectativa: Nothing good, really. They don't like it.
Chang: But after all these years, they are used to it.
Chato: I don't think my parents even know I'm in a band.

MRR: Latin America has a reputation for being rather conservative and Catholic—how do you feel your music is received by people in Guatemala? Are there strong reactions against it?
Chato: Five years earlier, it was kinda weird. But now people are opening up. I mean look, fuckin' Chang came out of the closet last year, man. Congratulations! *Salud*! [*applause*] So everybody is loosening up a little bit. So, we're just trying to fuck with anybody or everybody.
Expectativa: I think we've really played the most random of settings. I think Chato has to do with it…
Kumi: A bunch of private parties.
Expectativa: A bunch of rich people.
Chato: They fucking love it, man. They fucking love it. I don't know if it's necessarily rich. It's a bunch of people that listen to dance music or whatever they're playing in the clubs now. We hang out with a lot of people, so we end up playing those random places. We're playing the fuckin' International Burger Day thing on Sunday. So, we'll just play anything, you know? And most of the time people kinda like it because it's funny. And it's rowdy.

MRR: Is there a strong scene for hardcore and underground music in Guatemala? Are there a lot of venues that welcome your kind of music?
Chato: I mean it's weird now in Guate. There are a lot more people getting interested in the kind of music we're playing, but it doesn't necessarily mean they're in the scene, you know? We just started hanging out with the metal kids and even the rap kids. So, we're playing different shows, but I wouldn't consider it a scene. It's just like we're partying on a Friday night in Guate.
Expectativa: A lot of clubs and venues are being shut down. There are also new ones that are trying to pop up. And because we play around with a bunch of different types of musicians, we hang around with a bunch of different people, so there are always open doors for us.
Chato: There's a common denominator in bands, though. We always play with Gamezán, Fosa Común, Ansiedad, Rectocele, and some newer bands like Demaciado Humano and Canabicca.
Chang: Now people are going to Google that shit.
Chato: There's still a scene. It's a tiny scene and it's the kids we've hung out with since we were young that stayed, and some new punky kids like the Desvergue kids. They're playing those shows, but since there are very few bands we play with whomever, specially shitty ass rock bands from around here.

MRR: Do you want to explain why the venues are always being shut down?
Chato: You want to talk about Arzú? Our fucking mayor?
Kumi: Most of our venues are shitholes.
Chato: They are. That's why they get closed. Because the mayor of this fucking city is just a money grubbing fuck. And so the thing is, he just never gives anybody liquor licenses or anything. He ends up buying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the places with some private entity and they just shut it down. In Guate there's been a new type of gentrification but it's forced and backed up by the government and private investments. They're closing down crummy old bars and just putting in coffee shops, lofts, and fancy fucking restaurants. It's just because the government gives those guys permits (knowing they'll get at least 10% of whatever building they make or business they put up) and not local venues or the local, shitty bars we would play in.

MRR: What's the craziest thing that's happened at one of your shows?

Chato: Chang, you're always outdoing yourself. I mean, you broke your fuckin' foot last time because you were showing off your legs.

Chang: I wasn't showing off my legs, I was just…

Chato: For the record, he's got beautiful legs. He's a beautiful man.

Expectativa: I would say that between Chang's proclivity to stand on drums and amps and stuff and Chato's rants and rolling around…that and the fights…

Chato: Oh yeah! Chino was trying to fight a dude like a month ago, man. That shit was funny, man.

Expectativa: We were doing the Beastie Boys cover…

Chato: Yeah, I made him do the Beastie Boys cover because he wanted to get into a fight. I was like "Chino! C'mon, man!" But I mean, yeah, there's some rowdy shit at the shows. I don't think there's crazy shit going on, but it's just the craziest fucking people in the crowd. It could be like a fuckin' hobo just moshin' it up. I mean like this 70 year old dude with no pants, there's a video of it. There were these people from the street, we were playing in the middle of the park and they just came over and started dancing up a fuckin' storm. No pants and shit. That shit was a lot of fun.

MRR: How did you all get into underground music? Was there a gateway through a particular person or band?

Expectativa: It might sound dumb, but it was CD Warehouse.

Chato: Oh, shit yeah, man!

Expectativa: …and *Thrasher* magazine. Those things kinda collided and made me search for Fugazi and random punk music.

Chato: It was in Discomanía, not CD Warehouse, where I bumped into a used Fugazi record. But back then, there was no internet. I got into punk rock because of some older kids in my school. We used to skateboard together and they just got into music because of their older brothers, like Mako Diaz, man. I was like in the fifth grade. I was a fuckin' child And he got me into Adolescents, Angry Samoans and bands like that. Later on, we met Kathy. Kathy got us into the real shit. She was this American girl. Well, she's not a girl anymore. She's more like a lady.

Expectativa: Yeah, she was a lady back then, I think.

Chato: Yeah, sorry, America. No fuckin' disrespect to the ladies. I know how sensitive you are about the subject. But yeah, it was just this random girl we met at the mall. She was probably in her late twenties and we were fourteen or fifteen. She was totally stoked our friend Roberto had a Black Flag shirt. So, she was pretty impressed that anybody would listen to punk rock here in Guatemala City in like 1996. So, she had this big record collection and she got us into all sorts of stuff. She got me into Septic Death, Negative FX, and all that harder shit. Back when we met her, we were more into just the Epitaph catalogue and she got us into more substantial punk rock.

Chang: For me it was weird. I had a classmate from Canada. I used to get really excited about watching Blink-182 and Green Day on MTV. When I was talking about music to this guy, he was sort of like, "Well, that's cool but I'm going to introduce you to the real shit." He got me into the Sex Pistols, the Misfits, and all of that stuff. After that, he went back to Canada and I met these guys.

Gabo: I was into metal in high school. My grandma was friends with some ladies and one of their daughters had a boyfriend in a punk rock band that was looking for a singer. So, she saw me around and I had metal shirts on, you know? So, she asked me if I wanted to try out. So, when I tried out for the band I knew about punk rock, but only whatever was on the radio.

Chato: I remember that, man. We played that first show together. That shit was funny, man. He looked like fuckin' Bobby Hill. He was so tiny.

Gabo: So, I got into the band and everybody had really cool influences from skate punk to crossover thrash. So, everything just kinda made sense to me.

Kumi: I used to read a magazine called *The Grimoire of Exalted Deeds*.

Chato: Ah, is that a business journal?

MRR: Growing up, was it accessible to get records in Guatemala?

Chato: No. Not at all. Kathy, moved to Belgium and she had a distro. And from the States it was impossible to get anything after we got into all this music. So, she would send us all of these European zines in French and shit. We couldn't even fuckin' read 'em. Through zines, we started ordering records, but since we couldn't get them from the States, she started ordering shit to Belgium and would send it down to Guate. So it would take, what? Three and a half months to get a fuckin' record? So, that's why we know all of those records by heart. We couldn't get shit.

Expectativa: And once one of us got a record, it would be taped and prostituted massively amongst everybody.

Chato: The *Hardass* compilations! We used to get these compilations called Hardass. Well, that's the name the dude from the distro would call it. He was sending awesome fucking mixtapes and it would have Los Crudos, fuckin' Spazz, and European shit like Fingerprint, terrible Italian shit like Timebomb. It was a little bit of everything. From that to J Church. Fuckin' Promise Ring and shit. It was a little bit of everything. So, it was these mixtapes from Europe and we would pick up on that.

MRR: Were any of you straightedge? And if so, how did you break edge?

Chato: That would just be Expectativa. You were straightedge! You were straightedge too, Chang!

Expectativa: He was also Christian, so that doesn't count. He broke Christ.

Chang: How did I break? I think it was because of Gabo. I sort of quit the punk and hardcore scene for a couple of years. These skinhead guys started inviting me to their barbecue parties. I just saw these guys never stop drinking beer and I decided "What the fuck? It's just a drink." And I liked it.

Chato: And now he's a full-fledged drug addict. Alright? Además? Oh, Expectativa is still kinda straightedge.

Expectativa: I was straightedge for a long time, really. And then I moved to Spain. I didn't want to break edge and become one of those guys that goes to clubs. I just didn't want to be straightedge anymore.

Chato: And it's good shit!

Expectativa: And it's good shit. So, it seemed like a good idea.

Gabo: I had the Christian edge.

Expectativa: He broke the Christ!

Chato: Christ Edge!

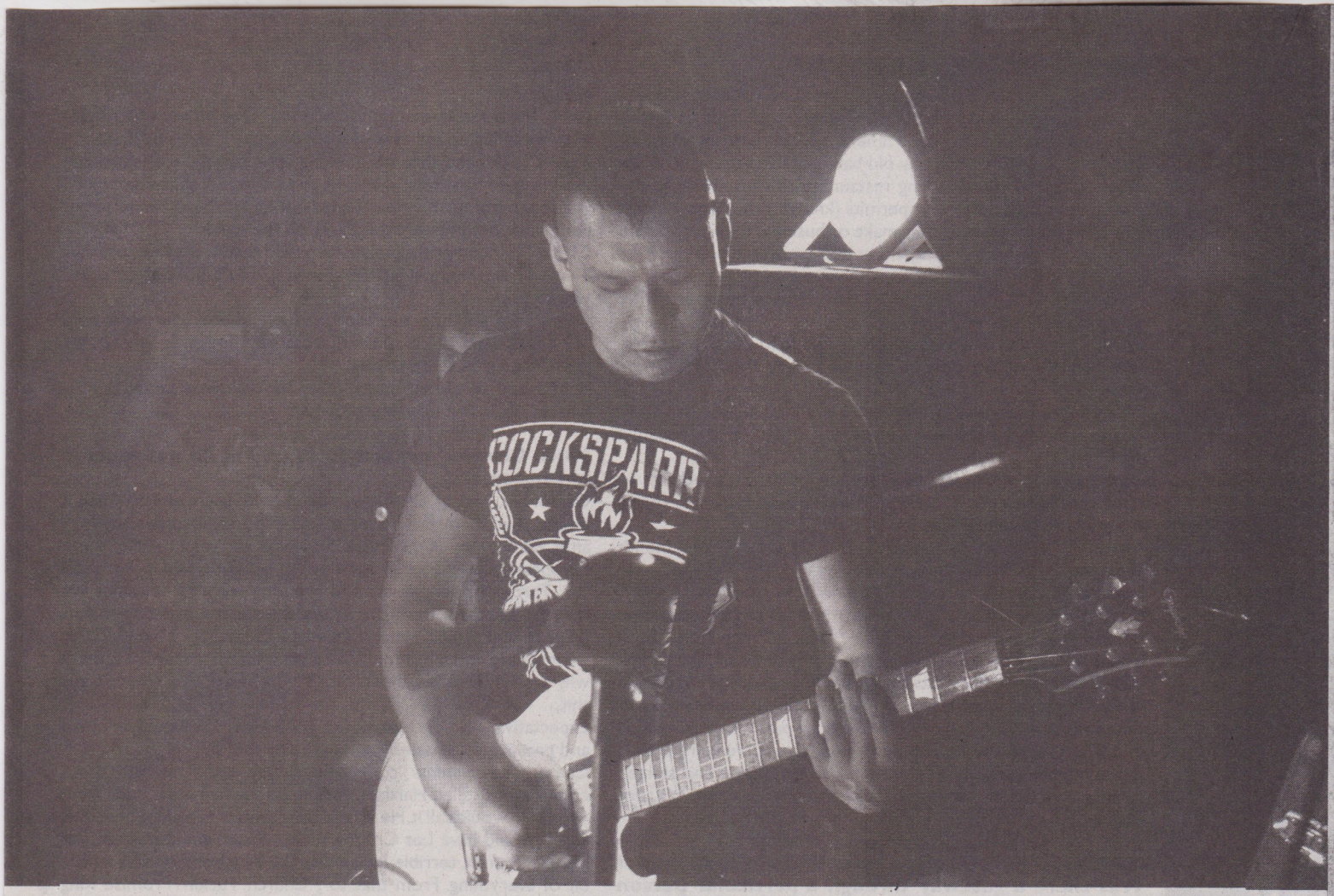
Chang: Christian Death!

Chato: Christian meth!

Gabo: When I was in college, all of my friends started robotripping. It seemed pretty fun.

Chato: And Kumi, you were never edge.

Kumi: Never edge, never veggie, never vegan. Never. None of that.



Chato: And I, I have never.
Expectativa: No n-n-n-n-no.
Chato: What, for like three weeks when I was like fourteen?
Expectativa: Chato tried.
Chato: For like two weeks!
Expectativa: Yeah, he lasted for like two weeks.
Chato: I was fourteen! I mean, I wouldn't drink because they wouldn't sell me that shit. I was straightedge by default. Been drinkin' ever since.

MRR: What's the most interesting music you've heard in 2017?
Chang: I would have to say Black Randy and the Metrosquad. And Defroster, of course.
Expectativa: I've been getting a lot more into Sun Ra and Albert Ayler.
Kumi: Big Daddy Kane.
Gabo: Cock Sparrer.
Expectativa: The Forever record
Chato: I've been into Italo-dance since last year, but I keep fuckin' with it. And the guy interviewing us right now just got me into Phurpa. It's the sickest shit. Sickest shit ever. And I started getting into that Thai shit you got me into, too. But I would say none of us really listen to that much hardcore. *MRR* send us a subscription so we can get up to date with our punk!!
Chang: Also, Tumour. I really like Tumour and Epiploenterocele Pusliquid Wormchunk. Gorenoise. Stuff like that. Bubble vocals.

MRR: How do you go about finding out about new music?
Expectativa: I think that I mainly just go back to records that I never paid attention to before.
Kumi: I'm addicted to buying shit on Bandcamp. I buy probably five records every week. What I do is I follow a bunch of people there and a bunch of labels. You listen to it, you like it, you buy it.
Chato: I think that the bottom line is following the trail of the bands you like and looking at what influenced them. Also, having a fucking friend like you, man. And Le Club. What's up to Le Club! We have this music listening club that gets together every Thursday. It's just random people bringing records, smoking weed, and listening to music. Most of the people there don't even listen to punk rock. It's all sorts of people. There's this dude that listens to reggae all the time, which is pretty unnerving. There are people that listen to EDM, unfortunately. A lot of people listen to metal. But what really brings the group together is probably rock'n'roll. So, that's a good input to new music.

MRR: Any bands you want to give a shout out to?
Chato: Jeannette, dude. That's my shit. "Soy Rebelde." I forgot to talk about that. That's the shit I'm into right now.
Chang. Defroster. And the Dunce Club.
Expectativa: All kidding aside, Gamezán, really.
Chato: Our boys, Gamezán! And Fosa Común!
Expectativa: Mother Earth.
Chato: Mother Earth! You need to get into some Mother Earth, man. It's forest crust.
Gabo: They're from Sololá.
Chato: It's these crusty kids that live in the fucking forest here.
Chang: The fucking lake.
Chato: A shout out to everybody in Guate that's doing whatever the fuck they want with music

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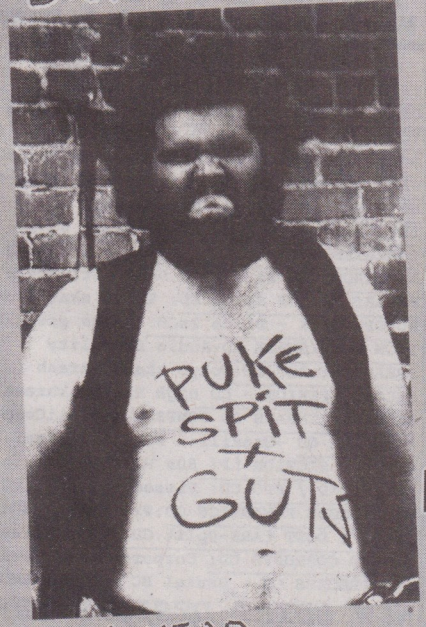

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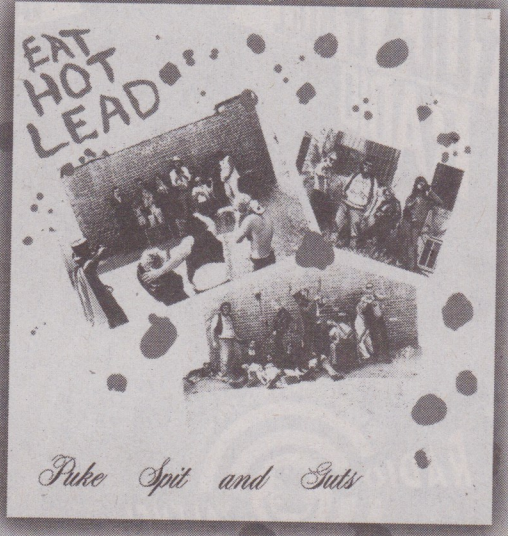

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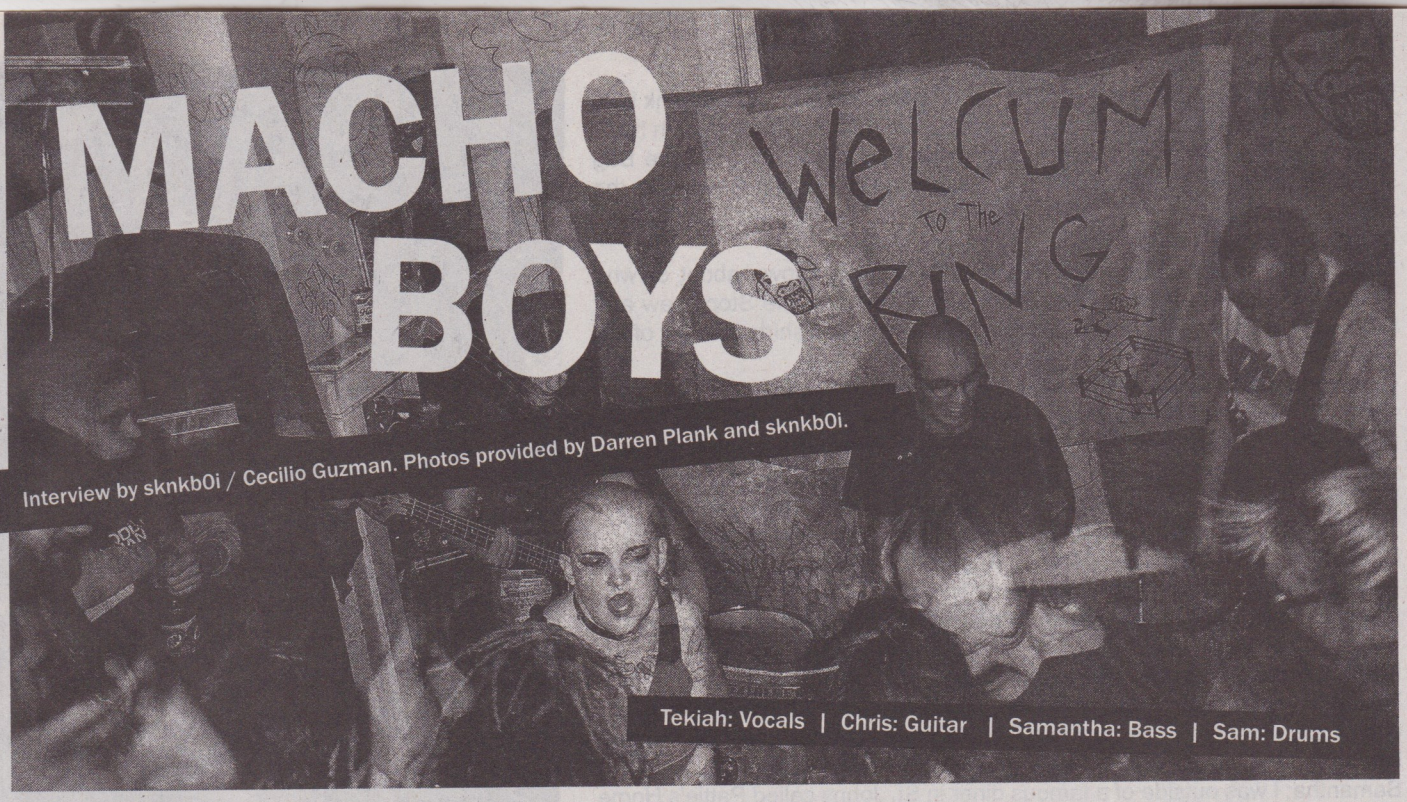


Interview by sknkb0i / Cecilio Guzman. Photos provided by Darren Plank and sknkb0i.

Tekiah: Vocals | Chris: Guitar | Samantha: Bass | Sam: Drums

Portland-based feminist hardcore band Macho Boys sat down with MRR *to discuss favorite shows, future plans, and the sustaining power of milk.*

MRR: How would you describe Macho Boys? How did the band form?
Samantha: Feminist hardcore.
Tekiah: We are kind of poking fun at the macho elements of hardcore, cause we're not all macho.
Samantha: None of us are macho. I [asked] Tekiah when she was going to start a band and what she would want to do in a band.
Tekiah: I said I wanted to start a hardcore band.
Samantha: So I filed that away. Later I was talking to Chris and asked him when he was going to start a hardcore band now that he was living in Portland and he said, "When someone asks me." Magically they were standing right next to each other and I said, "Hey, let's start a hardcore band." And they all agreed. Then we were outside and I asked who was going to play drums.
Chris: And I suggested Sam because we already play in a band together. The next day I texted Sam and said, "By the way, we're in a new band."
Tekiah: The funny thing is that Sam I work together and I didn't know that he was the "Sam" they were talking about.

MRR: What were some challenges when you all first started?
Tekiah: I was really nervous. I was scared to come to practice.
Samantha: Did you ever cancel because you were scared?
Tekiah: No. I thought about it though.

MRR: So who writes the songs?
Chris: I write most of the music. Sometimes I'll teach Sam the song and we'll record it and share it with Samantha and Tekiah. But I think we all have a hand in arranging them. And Tekiah writes the lyrics.
Tekiah: Yeah, it's nice to be able to listen to the recordings and write lyrics at home. Like, before our first practice, Chris had already written and recorded about four songs that he sent me.

MRR: What are some of the band's achievements?
Tekiah: We just released an LP.
Samantha: Yeah, Neck Chop Records just released it in the US. Sabotage will be releasing it in Europe.
Tekiah: And we've put out a demo that Chris recorded in our practice space.
Samantha: We also got the Stops to do a West Coast tour with us. They'd never done that.
Tekiah: Playing with Alice Bag felt like a really big accomplishment. We've actually gotten to play a lot of really cool shows.
Samantha: We have also raised quite a bit of money for the Network for Reproductive Options, our local abortion fund.
Tekiah: We have a shirt drawn by Keith Henderson that depicts Bull Nakano with Donald Trump in a grab hold. We made them when we first became a band in hopes that it would soon become irrelevant. Obviously it didn't. So after the election, we decided to do a fundraiser where the proceeds from shirt sales would go to NRO.

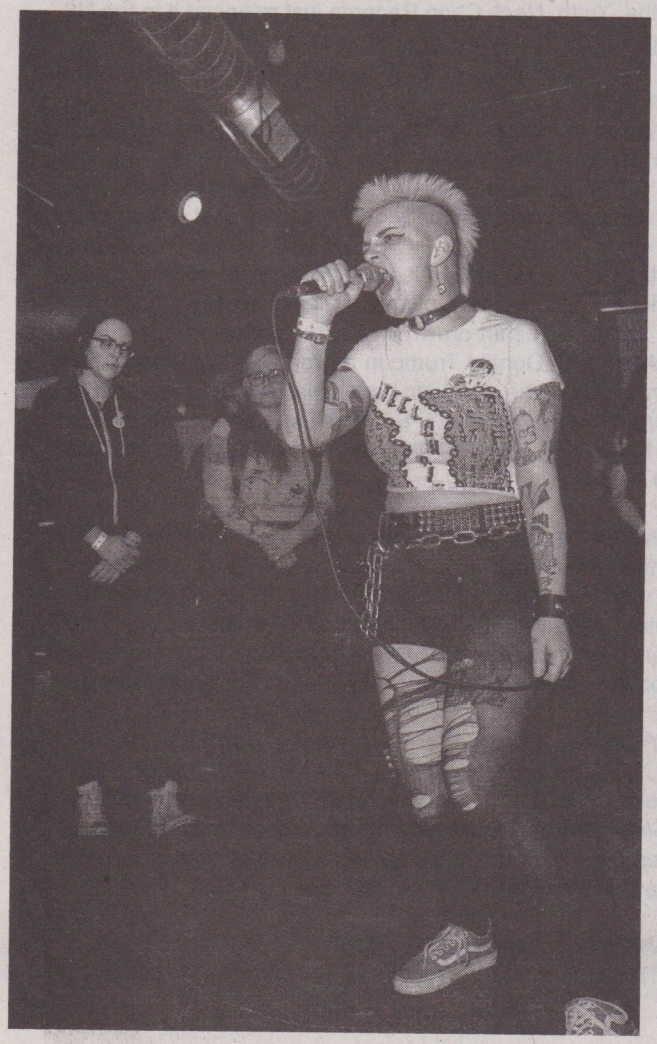
MRR: Which shows have been your favorite and why?
Samantha: The first one.
Tekiah: It was at Dark Place, a house in Portland that is now completely demolished. It had been around forever and I feel like every person in Portland has a story about that house. I lived there for five months, and we played there after I moved out.

MRR: You have a song about that house, don't you?
Tekiah: Yeah, it's a dark song about the Dark Place. Living there was pretty dark. [The show was also] the release for my zine, *Body Slam*. I've only released one issue because my computer has been broken, but I should have a new computer next month and I have a ton of ideas for the next one.

MRR: What about the rest of you?
Chris: That first show was really fun, but I actually do think that

the Alice Bag show might have been my favorite. I mean, she's a punk icon and it was pretty incredible to have the opportunity to play a show with her.
Sam: Well since everyone else has said the first show and the Alice Bag show, I'm going to go ahead and say Awesome Fest in San Diego with the Stops
Samantha: Mainly pop punk.
Sam: I felt like a lot of people who might not have known about or who wouldn't even usually listen to stuff like Macho Boys or the Stops saw and liked our bands. It was cool to see people wearing our t-shirts the rest of the weekend.
Chris: And hopefully some of them stopped listening to pop punk.
Sam: Or maybe just a little less.
Samantha: My favorite part of that set was that someone in the band before us was talking shit about people not dancing or something. They said something like "Are you gay? This isn't art school." Just something fucking weird.
Tekiah: Yeah, something just totally homophobic. I was really mad.
Samantha: So Tekiah said, "This one goes out to the last band" and we played "I Don't Wanna Hear It" by Minor Threat.
Chris: Oh wait, playing Blue Collar Wrestling might have been my favorite!

MRR: Oh yeah! How did that come about?
Tekiah: I'd been going to BCW forever, and Samantha happened to run into one of the wrestlers while buying a Donald Trump piñata for our tour kickoff show.
Samantha: I was outside of a famous diner in St. Johns called Pattie's Home Plate and this guy named Petrov came out and asked me where I got the piñata. He was like, "I wrestle and I want to have that piñata be my sidekick." And I was like "Oh, hey nice to meet you. I'm in a band and we want to make a music video in a wrestling ring. How do we make that happen?"



Chris: And that's like the weirdest thing in the world because we had been talking about making a music video in a wrestling ring since like our first practice.
Samantha: We had completely flaked on ever making it happen. But, fortuitously, I ran into Petrov. So he gave me his email and phone number and I kind of forgot to follow up. Be he was really on top of it, and ended up getting in touch with us.
Tekiah: So Samantha and I went to one of their training nights and met with Bad Blood.
Samantha: He is the Northwest Heavyweight Champion. Him and another wrestler took us into this back room to make a deal and they were really excited to have us play.
Tekiah: So we set a date to come and film, and we played in the wrestling ring during intermission. A bunch of our friends came and Samantha made a bunch of signs.
Samantha: They said things like "Piledrive the Patriarchy," "Macho Boys 3:16," "Stop the Hate," "I Love Tekiah."
Tekiah: People were jumping off the ropes and a bunch of security guards came rushing in to stop people from going crazy.
Chris: Yeah the security guards we like "Oh shit, this isn't choreographed!"
Tekiah: I think a bunch of the little kids there really liked it.
Samantha: Someone told me it was the first time they had ever actually seen a band.
Tekiah: They asked us to use our song "Stone Cold" for their web-show. I'm not sure if they actually ended up using it. It was really fun. Except I think Sam was having a really hard time because his drum set was bouncing up and down.
Sam: Everything was moving everywhere.
Chris: Oh yeah, we got there and realized we didn't have an extension cord to power our amps in the middle of this giant hall or a drum rug to keep Sam's drums [still], so I had to go to a store down the street and buy a rug and like two 25-foot long extension cords.
Tekiah: Drinks were super cheap too. Samantha bought us all a round and

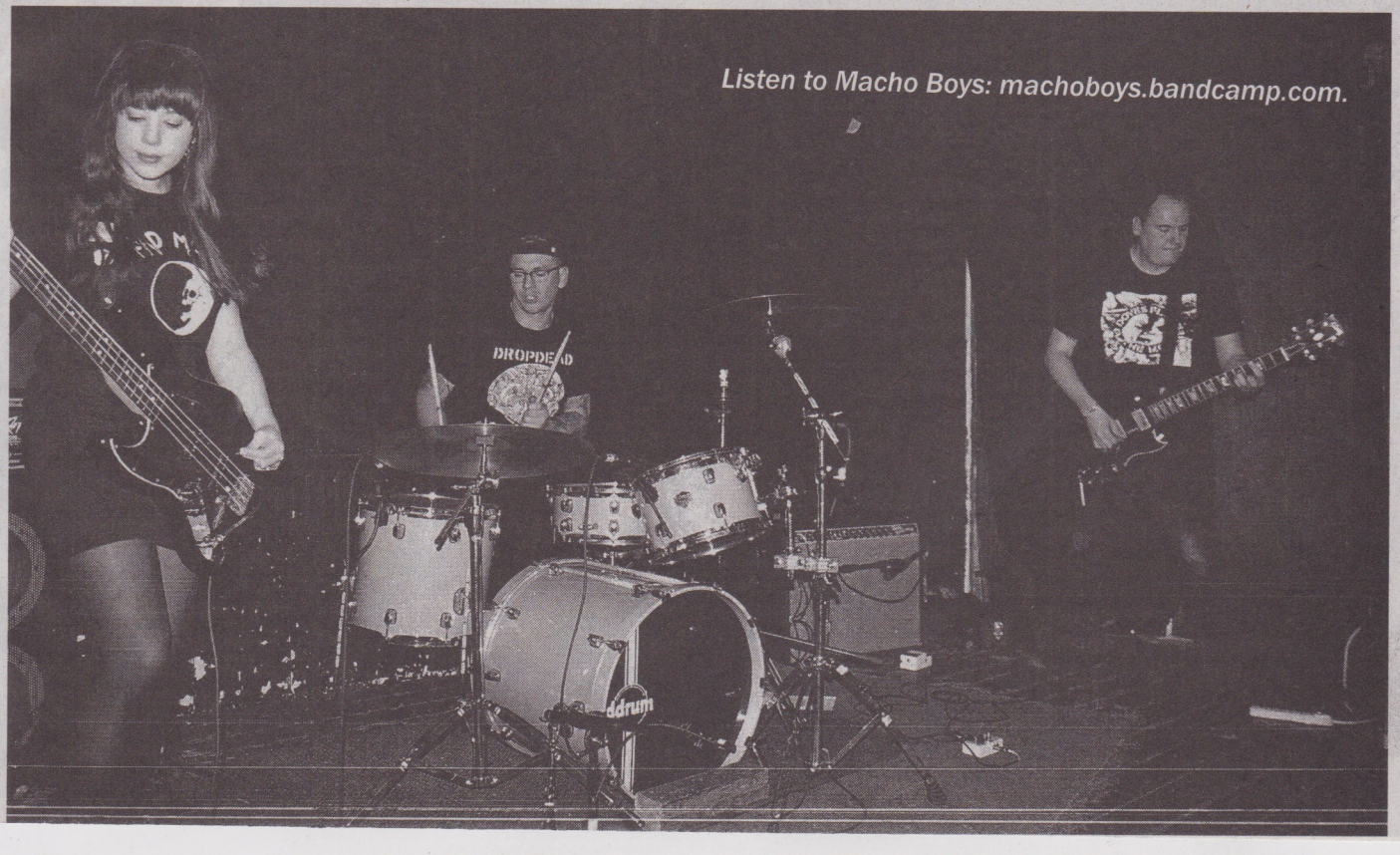
I think it was like $10.
Samantha: I was a baller that day.
Chris: "Drinks on me!"
Samantha: "Don't worry. I got this."
Tekiah: After we played a wrestler ran up to me and asked if he could take a selfie with me, which was so cool.
Chris: Are selfies the new autograph?
Samantha: I think so, yeah.

MRR: So what is it like to see people react positively to your band?
Tekiah: It means a lot to me, because a lot—not all, but a lot—of the lyrics are pretty personal. I sing about personal experiences that are sometimes weird or hard to talk about. I've never really felt like people care about what I have to say. So it means so much when people connect with that, especially since this is the first band I've ever been in.

MRR: So what's next for you all?
Samantha: We have to do a European tour at some point since the record is coming out there. I can't wait to play with all the dude hardcore bands. When Piss Test was over there, it was overwhelmingly dudes that we played with. And on the last night of tour, go figure, we played with this all guy hardcore band. Right before we played someone asked me if I was their merch girl. It made me so mad and I'll probably never forget that moment. I just said "No" and walked up on stage and started setting up my gear. But I think going over there and touring with Tekiah would be different.
Tekiah: Samantha and I talked about pouring milk on the crowd a long time ago and I haven't done it yet.
Samantha: So that might be to come.
Tekiah: Maybe when we're in Europe and we're playing with a bunch of bro-y hardcore bands. Samantha and I just really like milk, and everyone thinks it's really gross.
Samantha: It's our secret. We drink pints of milk.
Sam: It's OK. I drink non-homogenized milk.
Samantha: Every day?
Sam: Only when it's on sale.
Tekiah: You like to treat yourself.
Samantha: And Chris is vegan just for the record.
Chris: So I don't approve of any of this.

MRR: What do you think the age range is at most of your shows?
Tekiah: I think that playing all-ages shows is really important. But there aren't nearly enough all-ages spaces in this town.
Samantha: There are a ton of house shows, but they aren't necessarily into punk. Last year we played in the backyard of a house in Eastmoreland, which is a really rich neighborhood in Portland, and we were definitely the most aggressive sounding band.
Tekiah: Yeah, all the bands were pretty chill. And I feel like a lot of the house shows here are similar to that.
Chris: I talked to someone after that who was like "I was watching you all set up and I knew you were going to be really loud."

MRR: So what are some words of encouragement for people who want to start bands?
Chris: People should make more of an effort to start bands with people who haven't been in bands before. It's a really great experience.
Tekiah: Yeah, I've tried to be in bands before, playing the bass, and it never worked out because I wasn't good enough. Instead of trying to help me, people would just find someone else. So I think it's really important to be patient and encouraging of people.
Samantha: It's really exciting to play with someone who is slightly younger and newer to being in bands. Our age range in this band is 26 to 36. I think that one thing that has been really great for Macho Boys is that three of us have gone through all the steps that come with making a band—like, this is how you book a show, make a flyer, put out a record, make a t-shirt, etc.—and we can kind of give that knowledge to someone else. So I think if you're trying to start a band and you can find people who have and have not been in bands before then you should do it.



Listen to Macho Boys: machoboys.bandcamp.com.

Canon

MONIKA ESTRELLA NEGRA MICHELLE GARZA CERVERA

CONVERSATIONS ABOUT HORROR, SCI-FI, AND DIY FILMMAKING

Many of us QTIBIPOC and WOC punks know that the politics of exclusion and inclusion are bullshit, so why fucking deal with it at all? Instead of asking for representation and visibility in something we were part of creating and then only to be "curated," we are taking it. We are supporting one another and building alliances with all. Here are two punks who have never asked for permission to be included in punk and have similarly been taking their space in the film world.

In a dual interview, DIY filmmakers Michelle Garza Cervera from Mexico City and Monika Estrella Negra from Audre's Revenge Film Collective discuss their beloved chosen mediums of horror and sci-fi as filters to break down and examine how the world is skewed. Through this lens, these two punks contribute to a long history of resistance hoping to attract others who share a similar vision and inspire folks like themselves to take over creative outlets that they have actively been excluded from.

Introduction by Mariam Bastani. Interviews by Monika Estrella Negra and Michelle Garza Cervera. Translation by Brie Goldstein. Photos provided by Glitter Guts / Eric Strom, Eva Wu, and the filmmakers.

MONIKA ESTRELLA NEGRA INTERVIEWED BY MICHELLE GARZA CERVERA

MRR: Can you tell us about you and what do you do throughout your days?

Monika: I am the founder of Audre's Revenge Film and Black and Brown Punk Show Collective in Chicago. I have organized shows for the better part of six years, and have recently moved on to creating horror films. I directed and produced my first horror short titled *FLESH*—a horror / avant-garde mash-up about a queer, Black, female serial killer. Currently, I am residing in Toronto and working closely with my dear friend Mariam Bastani to bring Audre's Revenge Film to the forefront. I am pretty nomadic, so I bounce around from city to city, finding inspiration and other rad QTIBIPOC to collaborate with.

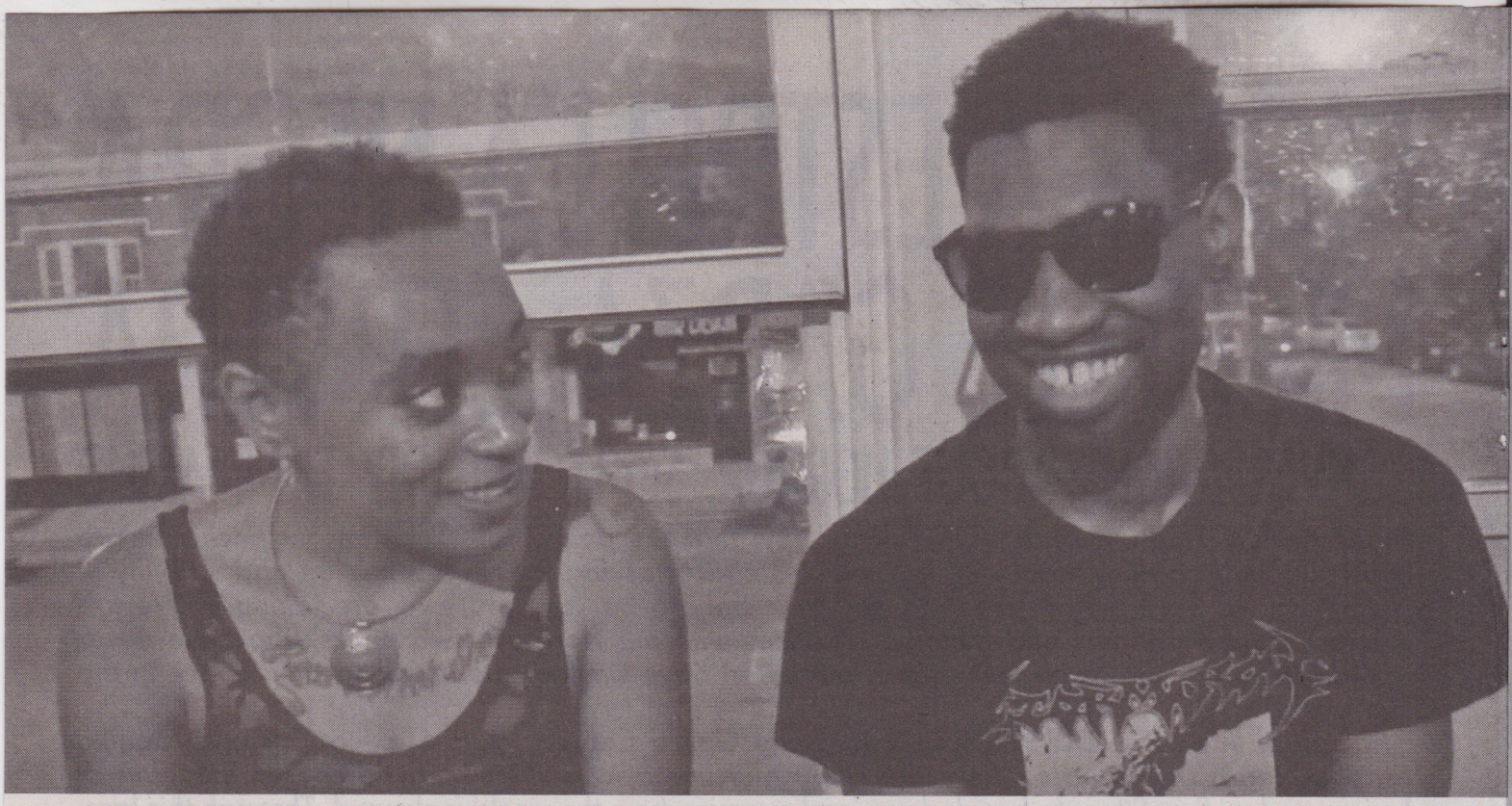
MRR: What brought you to create films?

Monika: I have always been an avid film dweeb. When I was a kid, I saved my allowance to go see "obscure" and mainstream films by myself. I have always learned about the world through film, and I dreamed of creating my own window into my world for people to view. I wanted to go to school for filmmaking, but was put off by the overwhelming presence of cis white men in the field. How many times can you sit through a lecture hall, with dudes trying to justify rape scenes in their shitty film noir piece? So, I took it upon myself to learn about every DIY method that could be used to create my own work. Call it good timing, but I am fortunate that current technology has made it possible for film to be attainable for everyone.

MRR: What does horror represent for you and what capacities do you think it possesses, narratively and politically speaking?

Monika: Horror has always been a source of comfort for me. I guess it's because the majority of horror films have always represented the irrational fears of the conditioned white psyche. The stories that were fabricated—they were too far removed from the realities I faced. That's why I was able to watch these films before bed (or maybe I'm just spooky?) or find myself laughing at the senseless victims. Horror, I believe, has always been utilized as a tool to talk about social taboos, the dark crevices of our society. This resulted in the genre being scapegoated as the "no limits'" zone—where any subject could exist, without tact.

As to be expected in a white supremacist world, this "lawless" genre left anyone who is marginalized (queer, Black, trans, women of color) highly underrepresented, or in



the void. Even worse, they were killed off within the first five minutes! There is also the issue of queer coding that happens in a number of horror films (*Sleepaway Camp*, *Silence of the Lambs*) that straight up vilified queer and trans people, no filter.

That being said, you can see where film and politics intertwine. So it's no wonder as to why I want to carve out that space for Black women, and QTIBIPOC. There have been films that have been made about the Black cisgender experience (*Get Out*), but I would prefer to push the envelope a bit further. There are some horrors that are completely intersectional, and the power to tell those stories will reside only with those who experience them everyday. To be blunt, QTIBIPOC artists struggle to bring their creative projects to the forefront. The need for networking and creating sustainable communities is imperative to keep our culture alive. If we do this in every facet of the arts, we will be an unstoppable and impenetrable force.

MRR: What movies have you made and what do they talk about? Where do the ideas came from?

Monika: I just finished my first short horror film last year, titled *FLESH*. The story follows a young, queer Black woman who embarks on a journey of self discovery—through means of murder. She faces issues surrounding white supremacy, white feminism, misogynoir, etc. On top of these social ills, she also has a hard time navigating the punk scene that supposedly is "inclusive." It was the first time I created something that was influenced from some of my trials. I tend to process situations a bit slower than the average person, so writing definitely helps me navigate that process a bit better. Eventually, I would love to interview the matriarchs of my family about their life experiences. I feel that my generation has been able to explore so much of the world, and our own identities. I come from a line of eccentric women, so I am definitely interested in bring their narratives to light.

MRR: How is your process of writing and filming your stories? How do you work with your team and who are they?

Monika: My process of writing stems from recognizing my own struggles. Whenever I am faced with a difficult situation, I try to think of it in terms of fantasy, and how I would depict it within a horror narrative. Misogynoir, racism...these are things that come with the territory of being myself. I have always used film and writing to cope with the process of healing from traumatic life experiences.

In terms of filming, I am still a baby when it comes to that! I literally taught myself the basics, since I didn't go to school for film. I love guerrilla filmmaking—making use of the environments we inhabit. I also feel that it makes my actors and myself feel more comfortable. The natural reactions to bystanders is also priceless, since I feel that our community is always under the gaze. A lot of the looks we get are merely because we are utilizing space that they don't want us to exist in. Forcing them to bask in our presence is my ultimate comfort zone.

My team consists of QTIBIPOC who all specialize in some aspect of media and film creation. I don't traditionally source out individuals in the film industry, but instead look to my friends to showcase their talents. Notable folks that I have collaborated with are Moor Mother, La Armada, Tigress (great Chicago band!), and Ono, all of which are rad folks who have been grinding and creating work that represent our own respective struggles and triumphs. I've also been to multiple cities to arrange photo shoots and host screenings. This has been the best way to network with individuals who are trying to build in their own communities. The world is a big place, but the QTIBIPOC world is surprisingly small! Every interaction, ever ycollaboration inspires me to push for more material—and to push my own creative tendencies.

MRR: How did Audre's Revenge come to life and where did you get the name from?
Monika: Audre's Revenge is named for Audre Lorde, the Black feminist intellectual whom I greatly admire. She was a Black lesbian, warrior, mother, and poet who wrote about her life experiences, cultural appropriation and the need for visibility of Black women. She is a great source of strength for me because of her fearlessness and wisdom.

The idea for this particular collective came after my last Black and Brown Punk Show and I began to wonder what my next endeavor would be. I knew that I wanted to begin focusing on a career that I could enjoy (being a barista or a barback was not cutting it), while also challenging myself to learn new skills. However, I was recently divorced, virtually homeless, and dealing with heavy drug / alcohol dependency. I couldn't conceive a future for myself at all. So I began to reassess this past decade that I had lived through and survived.

Since I have spent a great chunk of my life advocating for QTIBIPOC, I realized that my other love (film) didn't really represent us accurately. One of my greatest loves is vegging out and watching film, and to be quite honest—film saved my life! I was such an anomaly in my adolescence—growing up as a weird goth / punk hybrid Black dyke in the ghetto. I spent my weekends going to the library or to dingy secondhand media shops, sourcing out VHS tapes or going to see movies by myself. It was my version of self care or escapism. Anyway, I put two and two together and was like—"What if I combine my two passions *and* start making my own movies?" I mean, the greatest part about punk is the ability to start from nothing, and build upon that—no matter the medium. And bam! Here I am, and here we are.

MRR: What upcoming projects do you have? Other films, collective work, bands...?
Monika: I am currently working on two horror shorts—one is already in pre-production and the other one is being developed. They are a part of my *VENGEANCE ANTHOLOGY*, which will be a bigger taste of what Audre's Revenge Film has to offer. "Bitten" is the short that is in pre-production now, and it follows a queer Latinx vampire who discovers that she can absorb the transgenerational traumas of her victims. The other short is a secret!

I am also trying to gather funds in order to fund other films by ARF members. My idea is to not look to Hollywood to validate our stories and our narratives. Like, I am really stoked that *Get Out* was a success, and that Blumhouse is about to greenlight a horror film about Black lesbians...But the producers are still cis white men. I feel that they will do what Hollywood does to any genuine movement—package it, sell it, tokenize the fuck out of it, and typically ignore anyone who comes at the genre with any originality or critique of their capitalistic bullshit.

I do plan on hosting and booking shows (in the same light as Black and Brown) but here in Toronto. I have met some pretty rad QTIBIPOC here that are itching to change things, and I hope I can lend my support in that.

MRR: Are there some horror movies / directors that inspired you to make movies too? Can you tell us about a couple of those?
Monika: Kellee Terrell is an amazing director. She is one of the first queer Black women I know that has been making horror shorts. My favorite film by her is called *Goodnight My Love*, which is about a Black lesbian couple stranded in a basement during the zombie apocalypse.

Growing up, I would have to say that campy, '80s horror was my biggest obsession. *Night of the Demons*, *Bloody Birthday*, *Demons*, *Return of the Living Dead*, any George Romero movie, *Demon Knight* (I love *Tales of the Crypt*)... the list goes on. I think *Demon Knight* inspired me the most, because Jada Pinkett-Smith was the hero and I had

never seen a Black woman live past 20 minutes in any of the aforementioned films. So I became deeply attached to the idea of seeking out more Black protagonists. The *Alien* franchise is a big favorite of mine, though I am sincerely disappointed that the one time they offered a Black female protagonist was in *AVP*—which was *awful*! Despite that, the films *Alien* and *Aliens* made me fall in love with horror and sci-fi mash ups, and also exposed me to the dumbing down of cis male characters.

Outside of horror, I am a big fan of Maya Deren (coincidentally enough, an ARF member named Maya told me about her) and her influence on experimental film. She was also anti-Hollywood and wrote a number of important theses about how useless it is. I loved her ability to utilize visuals, and objects as important narratives in her films. Julie Dash, who made *Daughters of the Dust* is also a big influence on me. I liked her ability to find grace, beauty and magic within the struggle of the African diaspora. She's absolutely brilliant.

MRR: Where can we watch your films or contact you?

Monika: Soon, I will make it available to watch a host of b-roll films that I have created, as well as the creations of other ARF members for people to enjoy. I plan on hosting more screenings and galleries in different cities as well. When some grants come through, I plan on distributing our own work in DVD format so the artists can be compensated for their work. Too many distribution companies overlook our talent, so I figure that self-sustainability is key to Audre's Revenge.

We are on Instagram (audres.revenge.film) and Twitter (@audrerevenge) and of course, our website (audresrevengefilm.wixsite.com/audresrevengefilm). As always, if you are interested in hosting or collaborating with us, send all direct inquiries to audresrevengefilm@gmail.com If you want to donate, you can donate to us via PayPal at bnbpowerchicago@gmail.com!

Audre's Revenge is currently raising money to complete their VENGEANCE Anthology. Look up the fundraiser on Indiegogo!

MICHELLE GARZA CERVERA INTERVIEWED BY MONIKA ESTRELLA NEGRA

MRR: As a punk and as a filmmaker, what inspires you the most about film?

Michelle: *Cuando la cosas van mal en tu vida y en el lugar donde vives, pienso que lo que queda es lo que puedes hacer tu mismo o con tus amigos. Podemos aprovechar esa rabia para hacer algo con ella.*

El cine puede ser una herramienta para responder a lo que nos oprime. Te da chance de romper el silencio y decir esas verdades que la realidad y la rutina diaria se encargan de silenciar.

Vivimos estancados en mucha mierda y es lógico que gran parte del cine la refleje. A pesar de esto, hay muchas películas que me han hecho sentir acompañada y me han inspirado a hacer cine para acompañar a otrxs, al igual que en el punk.

Cuando leemos en las noticias acerca de lo que está pasando en el mundo, vemos muchas cifras y números. Cierto número de asesinatos, cierto número de refugiados, cierto número de encarcelamientos, etc...y entonces estos dígitos nos alejan de entender lo que implican. Cada una de esas cifras representa seres individuales y realidades completamente distintas, el cine te permite verlas y entender un poco más la gravedad de lo que está sucediendo.

La posibilidad de crear mundos deconstruidos, que nos saquen de este que está cada vez peor, es genial. El cine puede ser un puñetazo en la cara a todo lo que nos gustaría destruir.

When things go badly in your life or where you live, I think what's left are things you can do yourself or with friends. We can use that anger to do something with it. Cinema can be a tool to respond to what oppresses us. It gives you a chance to break the silence and speak the truths that are silenced by reality and our daily routine.

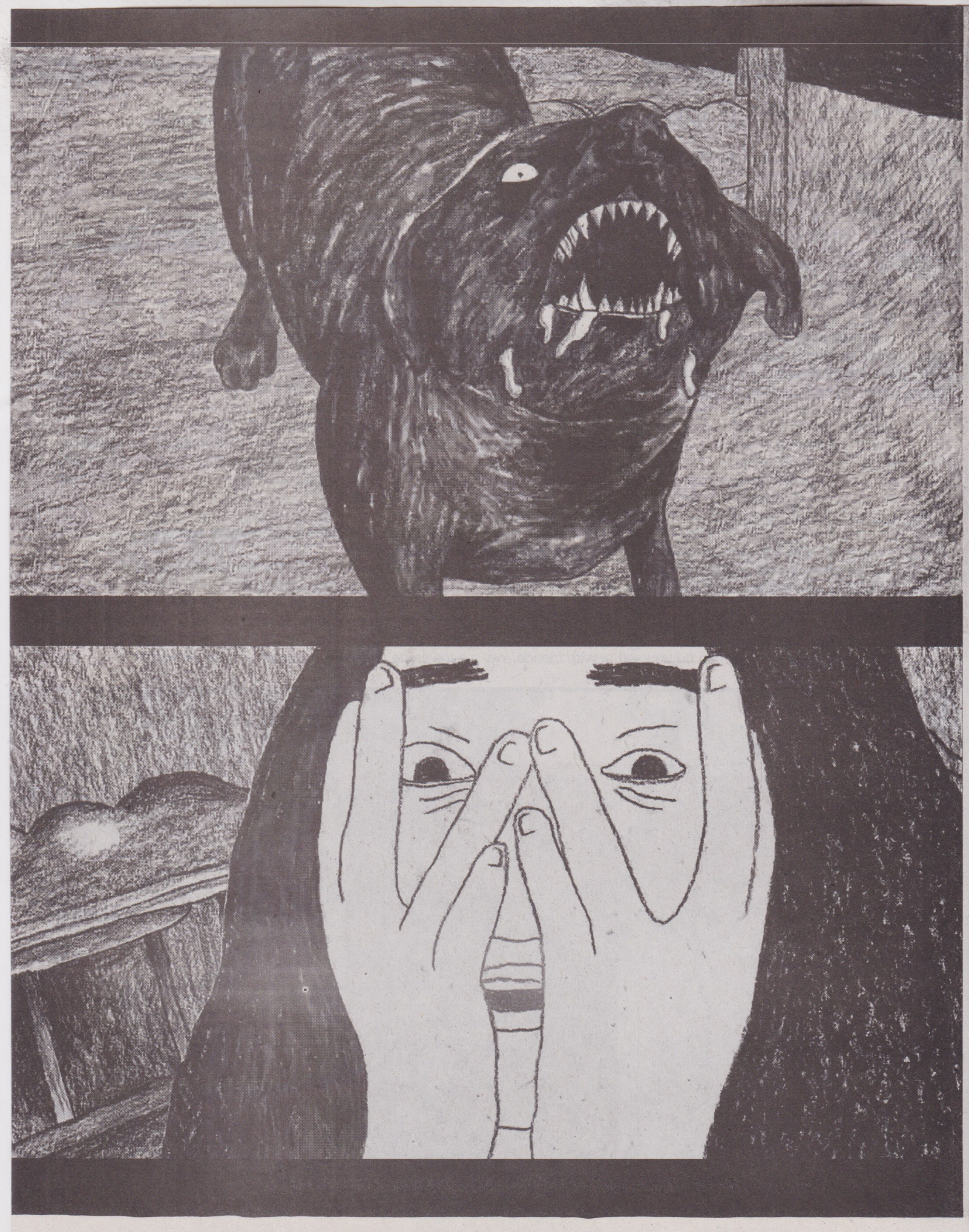
We're stuck living in a lot of shit and it's logical that a big part of cinema reflects that. Despite this, there are a lot of movies that have made me feel less lonely and have inspired me to make films to accompany others, just like in punk.

When we read in the news about what is happening in the world, we see many numbers. A certain number of murders, a certain number of refugees, a certain number of imprisonments, etc...and then these numbers keep us far from understanding what they imply. Each of these figures represents individual beings and completely different realities. Cinema allows you to see them and to understand the gravity of what is happening a little bit.

Our world keeps getting worse and worse, so the possibility of deconstructing this one and creating new worlds is really great. Cinema can be a punch in the face of everything that we'd like to destroy.

MRR: What role does your familial heritage play within your narratives?

Michelle: *Mi bisabuela Clara vivió a principios del siglo pasado en la Ciudad de México y fue una mujer que cortó la relación con su familia con tal de ser libre. Al conocer su historia, escribí un cortometraje inspirado en ella que terminó siendo La Rabia de Clara. Encontré la forma de hablar de su historia a través de la de una mujer encerrada con su familia en una*



cabaña en un bosque plagado por perros rabiosos.

El guion que estoy escribiendo ahora para mi primer largometraje está inspirado en la vida de mi abuela Irene y habla, a través de una historia de terror, acerca de una mujer que abandona a su esposo e hijo. "La mujer que abandona" es un tabú y quienes lo hacen suelen ser condenadas por la sociedad y vistas como monstruos.

Buscando en las historias de nuestros antepasados, podemos encontrar mucho de nosotros mismos y del lugar en donde vivimos. Quiero sacar del olvido y de la condena a mujeres de mi familia que se han ido, que ya no tienen como defenderse del mundo que las oprimió en vida. Tampoco es una regla que tengan que ser mis familiares, pero en estos dos casos así ha sido.

My great-grandmother, Clara, lived at the beginning of the last century in Mexico City. She cut ties with her family so that she could be free. Upon learning her story, I wrote a short film inspired by her which ended up being *La Rabia De Clara (Clara's Rage)*. I found a way to tell my great-grandmother's story through the story of a woman and her family, pent-up in a cabin in the woods plagued by rabid dogs.

The script that I'm writing right now for my first feature film is inspired by the life of my grandmother, Irene. Through the lens of horror, it tells the story of a woman who abandons her husband and son. "The woman who abandons" is a taboo and those who do it are usually condemned by society and viewed as monsters.

Looking at the stories of our ancestors, we can find out a lot about ourselves and the place we live in. I want to shine a light on the lives of my female ancestors and bring their stories to life without judgement. The stigma around their decisions still exists but because they are gone they have no way to defend themselves against the world that oppressed them. It's not necessarily a rule that they have to be my relatives, but in these two cases it has been like that.

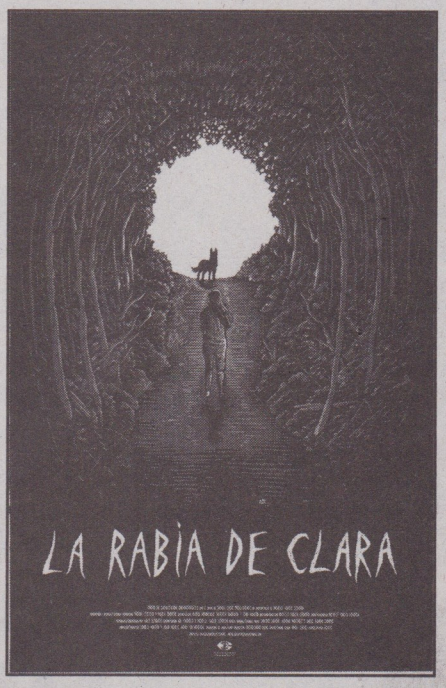
MRR: Do you feel as if horror is the only genre you can make your voice heard? If not, what other genres call to you?

Michelle: *Cuando se me ocurren las historias que quiero escribir no pienso en ningún género en específico. Siento que encasillarte desde un inicio puede limitar lo que quieres contar. Para mi lo primero es saber que quiero decir y ya luego me gusta usar elementos del terror o la ciencia ficción para decirlo. La realidad está diseñada para invisibilizar la violencia que vivimos, parece que hay algo diciéndonos: -todo está bien- –No hagas nada al respecto- -cállate- no te metas en problemas—estás loca, nadie te está atacando- Estos géneros te permiten crear distintos mundos violentos y distópicos que responden a esta realidad que quiere silenciarnos.*

When I come up with stories that I want to write, I don't think of a specific genre. I feel like boxing yourself in from the start can limit what you want to tell. For me, the first thing is knowing what I want to say and then I like to use elements of horror or science fiction to tell the story. The violence that we experience every day is invisible in our society and it seems like there is something telling us, "everything is okay," "don't do anything about it," "shut up," "don't involve yourself in problems," or "you're crazy, no one is attacking you." These film genres allow you to create different violent and dystopian worlds that respond to that reality that wants to silence us.

MRR: What is it like being a woman filmmaker in Mexico?

Michelle: *No creo que sea muy distinto a ser mujer en la mayoría de lugares y trabajos. Si es difícil darte cuenta cuando te metes al mundo del cine que casi no hay mujeres y no las ha hubo antes. No hay una sola mexicana que haya dirigido una película de terror, al menos no he logrado encontrarla. El terror y el cine de género está tomado por una sola perspectiva que es la masculina y es muy desalentador con todo lo que*



está pasando en nuestro país con respecto a la violencia de género. Hay miles de mujeres y trans siendo asesinadxs a diario. Para mi el cine de género debería responder a lo que está sucediendo a tu alrededor y es triste ver como la mayoría del cine de terror mexicano sigue explotando personajes de mujeres siendo violentadas. Es como si no hubiera ni siquiera un análisis previo a lo que se está diciendo. No digo que no deba de haber sangre y violencia, pienso que deberían de usarse para responder a lo que te genera rabia, no para simplemente repetir en pantalla una horrible realidad que ya existe. ¿Para qué narrar lo mismo que ya sucede a diario en tu horrible ciudad? Mejor usar esa rabia que te genera para decir algo al respecto.

I don't think that it's very distinct from being a woman in the majority of other places and jobs. When you get into the world of cinema, it's hard for you to realize that historically there are hardly any women. There is not one Mexican woman that has directed a horror film, or at least I have not been able to find one. Horror and movie genres are only taken from one masculine perspective which is very discouraging from everything that is happening in our country with regards to gendered violence. There are thousands of women and trans people murdered every year. For me film genres should respond to what is happening around you. It's sad to see that the majority of Mexican horror films continue exploiting characters of women being violated. It's as if there hasn't been any prior analysis to what is being said. I'm not saying that there shouldn't be blood and violence, but I think those things should be used to respond to something that generates rage, not simply to repeat on the screen the horrible reality that already exists. Why narrate the same thing that already happens every day in your horrible city? Better to use the rage that you generate to say something about it.

MRR: Can you tell us a bit about *México Bárbaro* and your short, *Vitriol*?
Michelle: *Me invitaron a participar en la compilación de cortos de terror mexicana* México Bárbaro. *La primer edición salió ya hace un par de años. La segunda que es en la que yo participo se va a estrenar en el festival Fantaspoa en Brasil este año. Se trata de invitar a la gente que está haciendo terror en el país a elegir una leyenda mexicana, cambiarla como quiera y hacer con eso un corto de diez minutos cada uno. Mi segmento se llama* Vitriol *y surgió de elegir la leyenda colonial de "La Quemada" que narra la historia de una mujer que decide quemar su propia cara para liberarse. Esperemos que la película logre estrenarse pronto en México y en otros países. El que quiera ver mi segmento y mis otros cortos, escríbame a mi correo y le paso los enlaces: michellegarzacervera@gmail.com*

I was invited to participate in a compilation of Mexican horror short films named *México Bárbaro* (*Barbarous Mexico*). The first edition came out a couple years ago already. I am participating in the second one, which is going to premier in the Fantaspoa Festival in Brazil this year. The producers invite filmmakers in the country to choose a Mexican legend and adapt it into a ten-minute short film. My segment is called *Vitriol*. It was inspired by the colonial legend, "La Quemada" (The Burn), which tells the story of a woman who decides to burn her own face in order to liberate herself. We hope that the movie can be released soon in Mexico and in other countries.

MRR: Do you think a sustainable DIY filmmaking scene is possible? Especially within the horror genre?
Michelle: *Claro que sí, esta entrevista surge de eso. Las conocí a uds y su colectivo Audre Revenge gracias a una amiga que le gusta el terror y ahora ya tenemos proyectos juntas, lo que me emociona mucho. Es difícil y caro hacer cine, pero cuando se encuentra a la gente indicada y dispuesta a encontrar los apoyos necesarios, todo empieza a fluir. Me refiero a personas que tienen el objetivo de decir algo y no de enriquecerse.*

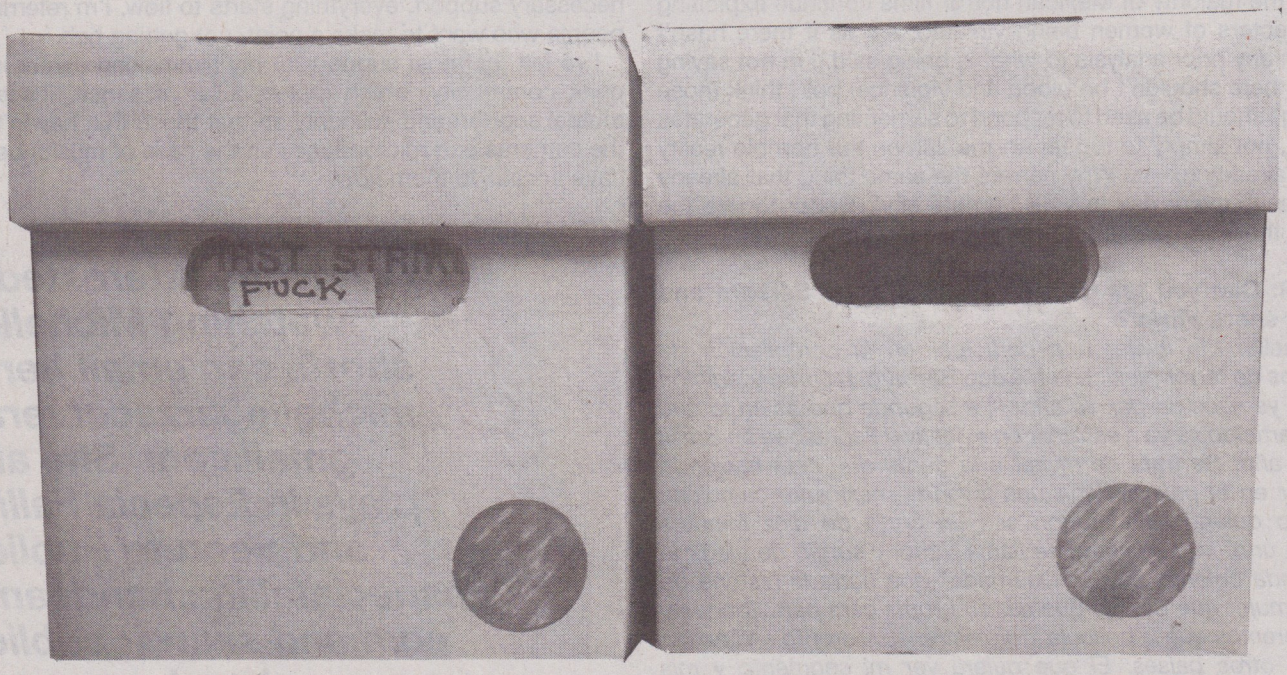
Donde he sentido más apoyo a mi trabajo como cineasta ha sido dentro de la comunidad punk, lo que tiene mucho sentido. Se trata de apoyo mutuo y solidaridad para que aquellos que han tenido menos las cámaras y los micrófonos (en el caso de la música), las tengan ahora.

Of course, this interview comes from that. I met you guys and your collective Audre's Revenge thanks to a friend that likes horror movies and now we have projects together, which is really exciting for me. It's difficult and expensive to make films, but when you find the right people who are willing to find the necessary support, everything starts to flow. I'm referring to people who want to make a point, not getting rich.

I've felt the most support for my filmmaking career in the punk community, which makes a lot of sense. It's about mutual support and solidarity so that those that haven't had the cameras and microphones (in the case of music) before, have access to them now.

Anyone interested in watching Michelle's shorts can email her at michellegarzacervera@gmail.com. She also plays in Especia Fallida and Secreto Publico: especiafallida.bandcamp.com and secretopublico.bandcamp.com.

The *MRR* Archive (48,000 records and counting!) just might be the world's largest public collection of punk material history. In 2017, we'll launch a searchable online database of our collection and back issues. But first we need your help!



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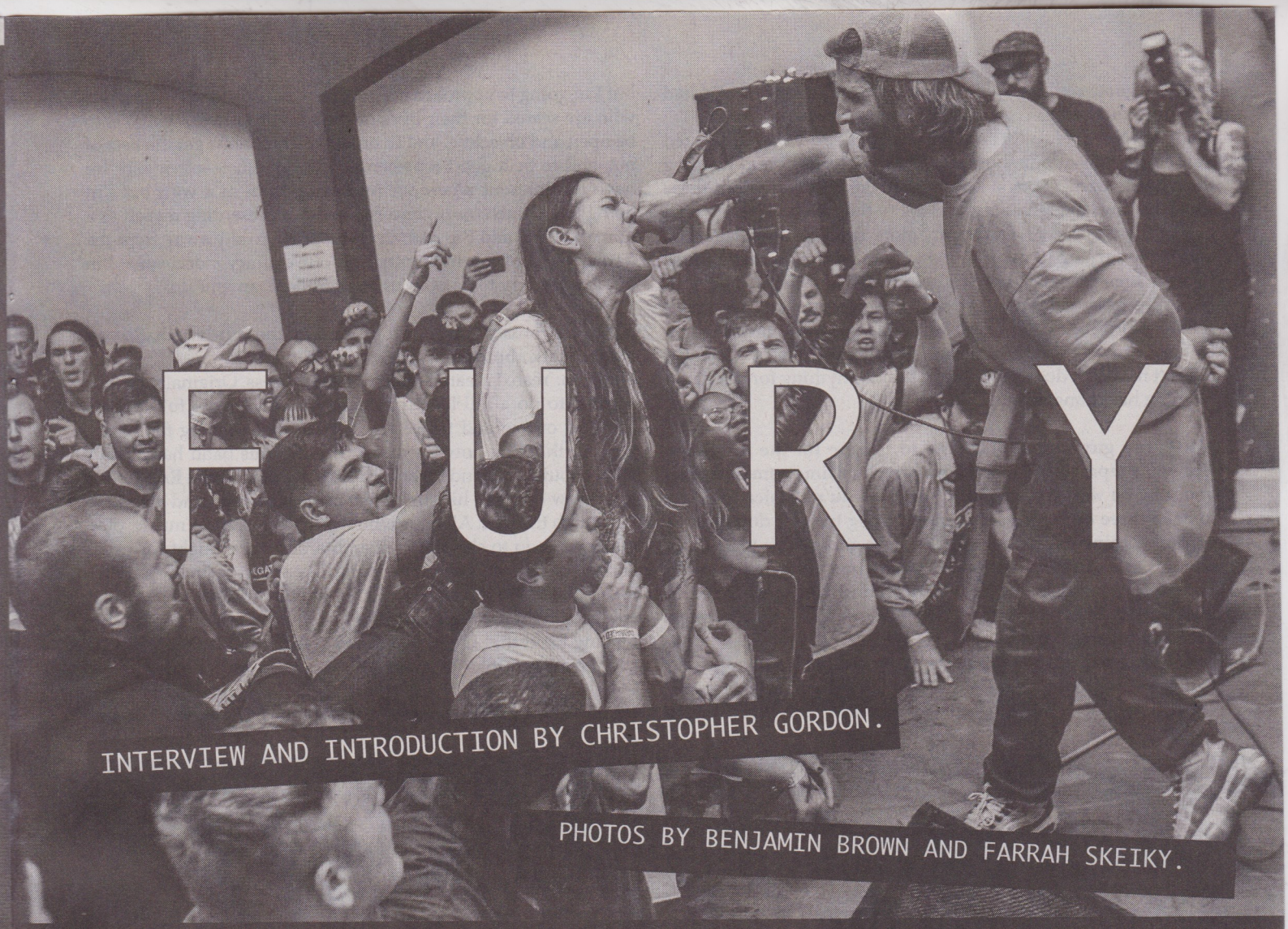

FURY

INTERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION BY CHRISTOPHER GORDON.

PHOTOS BY BENJAMIN BROWN AND FARRAH SKEIKY.

Fury started in Madison's bedroom at the end of 2013. They recorded a demo for Moshers Delight, toured relentlessly across the US, played a well-received show at America's Hardcore Festival in 2014, put out the Kingdom Come 7", *and just released their first full-length,* Paramount, *available from BBB Records.*

I left for the Peace Corps for twenty-seven months in August of 2014. Before I left I saw them play twice to small crowds and little fanfare. The band was made up of some of my best friends including Madison Woodward and Jeremy and Jerrod Stith. I tried my best to keep up with them from abroad, but right before they recorded the full-length, the line-up changed a little bit. When I got back, it was amazing to see a room full of young, diverse kids smiling as they sang along to every word off of the new album. But I was sad to see that Jerrod wasn't in the band anymore.

It's hard to say why some bands blow up and others don't, but there's something infectious about Fury that is deeper than the music they play. They are comprised of a group of friends who have been doing the same thing for years, and will continue to do the same thing long after they break up.

MRR: At what point did you decide you wanted to be in a band with Jeremy? I ask because there's a kind of an age gap between the two of you?

Madison Woodward: I've basically known Jeremy since he was a little kid. I guess, since I was a kid too. Years later, when we both lived in the Bay together, we would hang out and we definitely got to know each other a lot better during that time. We went from friendly acquaintances to actual friends. And then we were both going through similar situations when him and I were forced to move back down from the Bay about a year apart from each other. So we were kind of comrades-in-arms, and that eventually led to creating a band called Pocketknife together. I also thought Jeremy had a lot of energy and I knew he was a big fan of '80s and '90s hardcore, and that he liked where most of the influences were coming from for the Fury demo. So I thought it would be a cool mix. At the end of the day, he was a person I could hang out with. I think that's an important aspect for a band to have because being in a band with people who aren't your friends, it's just not an environment to create or perform. I've done it before, and with Fury it was created purely out of enjoyment. And I hadn't heard anyone else playing the style of music I wanted to hear, especially locally. I wanted to form the band with people who were my friends because I wanted it to be pure. I didn't want to portray it as something it wasn't. I think that's what's cool about this band is that we've done what we thought was cool. We're not trying to model it after a current style. We're not influenced by whatever popular things are going around. We're influenced by each other, by the people in this band.

MRR: While I was away, the full-length came out, and it got

a really good review on *Pitchfork*. Do you think that's had anything to do with your surge in popularity?
Madison: No, not at all. There aren't all of a sudden middle-aged indie rock guys at our shows standing in the back and bobbing their heads to our songs. I think that *Pitchfork* has to do these shock reviews to get people to come to their website. They do a few of these every year to attract more readers. It's a business, and they're trying to make money. If they can get different kids to read their reviews, they're going to make more money. It feels nice to be validated like that in some way, but we aren't selling more records because of it. More people aren't going to Fury shows because of it. So I can honestly tell you that it doesn't matter. It doesn't and hasn't done anything for our band. Nothing has changed because of it.

MRR: You guys are about to go to Europe for the first time. Are you prepared to have to answer every time someone asks you why he won the election? Because you're basically going to have three options: you're either going to say I don't know, or you're going to brush it off, or you're going have to actually attempt to address it. And every single person is going to ask you simply because you're American and you're expected to know. And that's what it's going to mean to go to Europe in 2017 as a touring band.
Jeremy: I think I'm going to come at it the same way I approach it, not only with my family who have things that I really disagree with (most of my family say and do things that I don't agree with), but I'm going to approach it the same way I approach my friends who are scared for their lives or their family's lives, which is to be open and objective, and to not let my emotions get the best of me, and to be a good representation of not just—obviously we have to represent where we're coming from in a way, but I'm going to be much more concerned with representing myself as a human being, and I'm definitely not going to shy away from the darker parts of my humanity and our country's decisions. I'm just going to try to be open and not bullshit anyone.

MRR: Obviously you're still promoting the full-length, do you want to talk about it?
Madison: Yeah, I mean it's been a long process. Originally I never wanted to do a full-length as most great hardcore full-lengths are kind of few and far between. I say that as a big fan of the genre, I think by now it's just a fact. But this band has always been about our friends. The first time we played the East Coast, Riley flew out, and his stinky feet came with him, and we made it through the tour. All of us who would just listen to music, play music, and go to shows together, literally every night for years and years—it felt like a whole thing, like we were finally moving together, but we were taking all the homies with us, and it's just crazy that you had been there for every step of the way, and this fucking band that I recorded in my bedroom, this tape that you could barely unfold the layout of.

MRR: ...for some reason it sold 1,000 copies. It's incredible, and

I think the only genre that can do that is hardcore. In 2016 no one can sell 1,000 demo tapes. It's fucking unreal. It's nuts. But you have to ask yourself why did this band take off when none of your other bands have? Why is this band popular when none of your other previous bands or current bands are?
Madison: It's lightning in a bottle.

MRR: It had a spark, and it's exciting to watch. It's the coolest thing in the whole world to see your friends get noticed because I've literally seen you play in bands since you were sixteen. You were the first person I ever knew to put out vinyl, and it was really inspiring to see a high school friend put out a record. And you're going to be thirty years old soon, and it's weird to see someone you've watched for almost fifteen years do the same thing—you didn't do anything different with this band!
Madison: No, and that's why I always say we've done everything we wanted to do, and we've done it our way, and we're not subscribing to some set of rules. We're not doing something that's already been done and already been heard a hundred times. We're just trying to do what seems right to the five of us. We're not trying to act like someone else. A lot of my favorite bands, they never gave a shit either. That's the thing with this band, and I have no idea why people keep listening to us, but I think all of us keep doing what we want to do, and maybe that's just some shit that people haven't heard yet. Maybe kids are just interested in hearing some new stuff and experiencing new things live.

You know, I use to go to shows when I was a kid, and the main thing on my mind was, I hope I don't get beat up or knocked out because that was the fucking vibe. There was a lot of violence. Which is fine, sometimes aggressive music comes with violence. Obviously I knew what I was getting myself into otherwise I would have just stayed home. However, that's not this band's vibe, and I can proudly tell you that at our shows no one fucking fights, and if it did happen it would get squashed immediately, but it would just never happen. And that's the thing about it because we're not projecting that, man. We're not pretending to be hard guys. We're just normal fucking dudes from Orange County. You know? We're from fucking Orange County. No one is hard here. You fucking can't be. You know what I'm saying? I don't know, and we're just enjoying ourselves up there, and I think that people see that, and they're hopefully enjoying themselves out there too.
Jeremy: We are on a ride together, and it is very much us inviting people, saying "Come with us."
Madison: And if they don't then that's chill.
Jeremy: Yeah because there are so many places for them to go, but it is such an insular thing with our core group of people, and we're so in tune. The five of us are so open with ourselves and with each other, and that's what makes it work for us.
Madison: And I think another important thing [is] when we play live, we're doing it for fun. We don't practice dude. We straight up haven't practiced in—not exaggerating—half a year.
Jeremy: Our last three practices were our last three shows.

Madison: And that's the thing, we're not going up there to sound like the best band you've ever heard. We're going up there because we're enjoying it. We're having fun, and we're going to do it regardless of if it's in this band or not. If the band broke up tomorrow, I'd start a new band, and I'd go play to fifteen fucking people like I've been doing since I started playing music and I don't give a shit because that's my outlet, and I'm not fucking kidding anyone. I'm getting older. I'm going to start having to figure out some longevity in terms of where I'm going, but regardless of that I'm going to probably end up playing in a band that will end up playing to a group of ten of my friends and that's okay because that's what I really enjoy doing. And if it's not ten people, if it's more like fifty people, that's great. Or if it's this band, and for some reason four hundred people come to our shows? That's fucking awesome, I'm very grateful for that but either way I'm going to go grab my guitar or play the drums, and I'm just going to do it because that's what I've been doing since I was fifteen. And so I don't know...it's weird, I'm not trying to talk shit, but when I see people, and they stop playing music, and they're like "I'm done with music. I'm done. This band was it, and I'm done." It's just like, "What? What do you mean you're done? Just fucking pick up a guitar!" You don't have to be done with music just because your band isn't successful. Just because your band isn't playing the venues they used to play or some shit like that. And the thing is if that is the case, then you're not a musician. You're doing it for other reasons than the love of it. And that's what this band is. I think this band is all about love, and I think people should feel that when we play, and I hope people hear that when they listen to our records, and most importantly I hope people don't think I'm a hippy after reading this interview.

Jeremy: It's so crazy to look at Madi and get lost, and forget everything. I'm just like "Fuck!" This thing that I believed in when I was so young is still giving me that same type of feeling but on a whole new and different level. And on top of that I'm doing it with the people that introduced me to all of this.

Madison: Yeah, and that's the thing I wanted to touch on. If we didn't enjoy each other's company we wouldn't be fucking playing together. You know what I mean? And I'm not trying to get rough or anything, but we've been on tour now, like a good chunk, and it blows my fucking mind that a percentage of these bands have members that just fucking hate each other. And every chance they get, they're pouring their heart out to you like, "Oh I fucking hate this guy that I have to sit next to for fucking six months out of the year to play in this band that I'm making $200 for." And it's like, "Yo! You don't have to do this." Like if this is on your mind all the time, you don't have to fucking do this. Because there are a lot of ways you can make $200. The thing about it is, we enjoy sitting in a car with each other as much as we do playing on stage with each other. We love it because we've known each other for so long, and we're all so close, and fortunately we all have a good sense of humor, and we're open to talking to about anything.

MRR: Can you talk about how it felt to have to kick your twin brother out of the band?

Jeremy: It was the hardest thing I've ever done. He's been my best friend my entire life. We've done everything together our whole lives—you know, both of our lives. There was a time when I moved away to the Bay Area to go to college at Cal State East Bay, and just like me, he was supposed to go with me on a soccer scholarship. At the last minute he decided to stay home for reasons that I didn't exactly approve of and we didn't really talk to each other for about six months. Eventually he came up to visit, and we made up as brothers do. Later, when I had to move back home, I was disillusioned with my painting. I wasn't motivated to paint anymore, and my outlet moved to music. When I moved back, I had been going to shows a lot with Jerrod and my friends, and after a certain point, I decided that I could do it too. So I bought a drum set off some thirteen-year-old kid's parents on Craigslist. I started a band called Layman with my friend Chris Torres after we saw No Age play a protest show in Chinatown to rally against the proposed Wal-Mart that was getting built there. After a while, Jerrod had caught the bug too, and decided he was going to learn how to play the bass. Both of us joined another band called Gem with some new friends around the same time Fury was being birthed. When we started Fury, and everything took off it felt really special. I was traveling and seeing all of these places for the first time with my best friend. And ever since his absence from the band, it's impossible not to think about him every few moments that we're out on the road. Eventually we got Alex's brother, Danny, to be our bassist and I wouldn't have continued playing in the band had it been anyone else. Jerrod and I still live together. We still share a room with our beds about two feet from each other—just like it was when we were babies. It was impossible to ignore the situation, but neither of us wanted to talk about it for a long time, even when he was the one dropping me off at the airport while Fury was playing festivals on the East Coast.

MRR: Have you two come to terms with it since it happened?

Jeremy: Yeah, but it took a long time. He was there when we were recording the record and after *Paramount* came out, we were able to discuss it, and he gave me his blessing, which meant a lot to me. He told me he was so proud.

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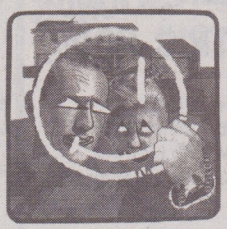

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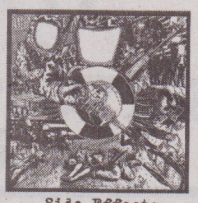

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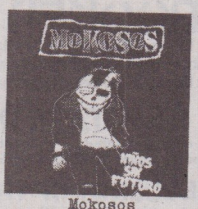

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BAUS

If you've ever been fortunate enough to experience the DIY punk scene in Oakland, California in the last couple of years, then chances are you've heard, or better yet played with Baus. Their signature sound is an idiosyncratic blend of post-punk, funk, and garage, that slams just as hard as gets your hips swaying. As prolific as Baus have been in their local community of Oakland, running the gambit of beloved DIY spaces, houses parties, abandoned buildings, and local bars, they've also played under bridges in Pittsburgh and countless string of basements parties across both coasts. If they can plug in their instruments, they will play. I met up with Mike, Sierra and Thomas at their New Year's Eve Eve show in Oakland, a benefit for Qilombo, a cultural community center that was targeted by city officials and property speculators in the wake of the Ghostship fire. Oakland was suffering from the fresh wounds of the fire, and the fear and terror that immediately followed with eviction after eviction of what were once considered safe and thriving community havens for artists and marginalized people was palpable. A sense of change and heartbreak, but also an immense feeling of hope was in the air that night.

Interview and introduction by Camylle Reynolds. Photos provided by Julie Juarez.

MRR: First off, let's set the record straight. I've talked to many people who do not know how to pronounce your band name.
Thomas: I think the original pronunciation of it was "boss."

MRR: So it was B-O-S-S when you first started?
Thomas: The spelling of it wasn't ever actually established, it was just like, "Oh, our band should be called Boss." But then we decided it should be spelled B-A-U-S.

MRR: I've heard many people pronounce it like Baus, but they kind of stumble over it.
Mike: That's great because that's not what we originally intended at all. Our teeth grinded for a while but I kind of fell in love with how people didn't know how to pronounce it.

MRR: You wanted the mystery of it.
Mike: Actually, my friend Jack who left the show right now, he actually thought that the whole time that the "S" was silent!

MRR: So he thought it was "Bau"? [*laughter*]
Mike: Bau. Why didn't I think of that!? But it's Boss, and it's Baus. As long as people know it's B-A-U-S and they know our music than it's all that matters.

MRR: Cool. Let's talk about your sound, It's funk, it's punk, it's garage, it sounds a bit like the Minutemen. How do you define your sound? Because honestly, it's hard to define.
Mike: It's funny that you bring up the Minutemen because we were playing music for a couple years before someone compared us to the Minutemen. And at that point I discovered the Minutemen and I was like, "wow." I looked them up and I realized that they were influenced by the same amazing music that we were influenced by. Just really good funk and avant-garde rock stuff, just really expressive music.

MRR: Baus definitely has funk drums and defined bass.
Sierra: This is my first band. And I learned how to play bass in this band. Mike taught me everything that I know. And he's been a great teacher. If it weren't for him I would have never have found out I love playing music. And it's definitely all very funk driven. All of it
Mike: We also have to thank Thomas's dad for pushing it. Thomas and I grew up together. We've known each other since I was twelve and he was thirteen, so that's like sixteen years or something, and he made sure we kept playing music so long as he learned the song "Flashlight."
Thomas: By Parliament-Funkadelic.
Mike: We were like no, that's not punk, but now all we want to do is learn that song!?

MRR: Right on.
Mike: Shout out to Daryl, Thomas's dad!
Thomas: My dad put that into our heads, he planted that seed, and you know, it took eight or nine years for it to grow but it has been a big part of Baus.

MRR: So, you and Mike have been playing music that long together? Sixteen years?
Mike: We've been friends, we've made our friendship mainly with music and we've been through ups and downs. It's hard to come across chemistry like that. Sierra came into that equation.

MRR: How did you meet Sierra?
Sierra: We both worked at Homeroom, a mac'n'cheese restaurant, the trademark. Hee-hee!
Mike: She and I hung out for a while and I noticed that she could sing on point, she could dance on point...

MRR: She had a good sense of rhythm. Perfect for a bassist
Mike: Most definitely, and it's funny, she came at a time when Thomas and I were going to dick around on drums and guitar and I asked her to pick up a bass.
Sierra: And I didn't want to.
Mike: She said no, and I was like what? She said no one notices the bass, and I told her she wasn't listening. And right then and there she agreed to put on the strap and play a really awesome bassline I knew she could play and that was our first song.
Sierra: "Modern Man."
Mike: The next day we were a band, and we've always kept it strictly a three-piece and what's great about that is that we can. Just the three of us.

MRR: With the sound? So, maximizing on the sound for everyone when you only have a three-piece.
Mike: In my opinion it's great because it's less people to work with.

MRR: Sure, and it's easy to travel! There's more room in the car for gear. You've been an Oakland band and an Oakland staple for a couple years where you guys were playing up to four or five shows a month. Now things are changing. Mike has moved down to LA. Thomas is going to be moving. Sierra, there's a question mark as to where you are moving. So how did you come to Oakland? And what's your future as a band since you're an "Oakland" band?
Thomas: I came to Oakland six years ago, since I wasn't doing anything in Southern California. Mike had moved up four years prior to go to school. Seeing as Mike was the only person I successfully made music with I didn't have any reason to not come up and continue playing music. So, that's what we did. Oakland was a bit of a culture shock for both of us I'm sure, but definitely for me. I had no idea what I was getting myself into, but I grew to love it.

When we first started playing music again, Mike had explained to me that I was going to have to unlearn the way I played drums in order to play the stuff he was interested in writing. Stuff that he learned in Oakland, in school. And I did that. It's been interesting, me learning how to play drums in a whole different light. If I had been playing anywhere else... .
Mike: I think that if there's one thing about Baus it's very Oakland.
Thomas: It's grimy. It's not perfect, it's not clean, but it's still fresh.

MRR: It's still fresh even though it's kind of hot mess sometimes.
Mike: When we moved here we had different mindsets because Thomas, as you know, is an amazing drummer, and the first thing I did was get a full drum set and I took away cymbals, and some drums, and said, "This is all you need, you just need to play the best drums with as little as you have to work with" and it's proven to really shine on him.

MRR: The drums definitely shine. I think Thomas is an excellent drummer, but I'm partial since he's also in my band (B.D. / Bad Daddies). He's intuitive, he can work his way around whatever you give him. He'll put his own signature mark on it.
Mike: I think that what really changed our way of thinking about rhythm was I studied under a West African drummer and he taught me all of these polyrhythms and funk and what not. We got to messing around with that even before we met Sierra. It drew us out of the straightforward punk stuff. We were just testing ourselves with rhythm, and I think it's been important to our sound.

MRR: It's what makes your band so different. Sierra, how did you come to Oakland?
Sierra: Well my sister lived in San Francisco, and my best friend wanted to move out to the Bay. I didn't know anything about Oakland at all, and she wanted to move to Oakland directly. This was 2011. I was 20, I moved straight to Oakland and I didn't know anybody at all and my first experience was going to a show at Mama Buzz. I work at Telegraph now, which is the old Mama Buzz. I went to a show there to see my sister's boyfriend band, and I knew instantly that this is where I was supposed to be.

MRR: Really?
Sierra: Yeah. 100 percent. I hadn't been to a show, a DIY show like that since I moved from Arizona which was so long ago. And I knew this was where I wanted to be and everything kind of fell into place. I started working and met Mike and Thomas, started playing music and we've met the most amazing DIY musicians ever and became a part of this community which is Oakland and I feel like I really became the person I've wanted to be by living here. I feel so much a part of this community,

and our band has been a huge part of this community. We do whatever we can to help touring bands or play benefits, throw shows, and that's why we've played so often honestly because we were doing it for somebody else. I think that's a big part of why we feel like our band is so much a part of Oakland.

Mike: Oakland does this. Everyone should recognize Oakland artists. I might be a pessimist but honestly, get it while it lasts because there are so many brilliant artists here. We want to try and really keep it going. People are so supportive. There's that camaraderie between people who are trying to travel who want to share their art with other people. Oakland has that culture, and it's very profound.

MRR: For a band that's so prolific what were your best, worst, and most memorable shows? Go!

Mike: It's hard to pick a best and worst. We've had a lot of bad nights but only because of shit that would happen to us before or after a show. The first thing that comes to mind was a show in Seattle where someone stole our whole tour fund. And even that show, Pizza Fest, was a lot of fun.

Thomas: My favorite show (excluding this past NYEE show) was in San Francisco. It was actually the second show we had played that day and it was in the kitchen on the second floor of this duplex. It was raining outside so there were probably between 40 to 50 people crammed into this one room. We had no space to move, but once we started playing the crowd's enthusiasm smashed my anxiety and it ended up just being a bunch fun.

Sierra: Most memorable: this NYEE show for sure. The energy was incredible and made me feel good about keeping BAUS alive as long as we are able. All the bands / our friends were amazing. So much support from our friends and community, it was truly a high point.

Best show: it's tough to say, but it's definitely one of our house shows. I second Thomas's mention. That house was so random to us because it was by the UCSF campus / upper Haight. Who knew? And we were coming from our first show of the night, which was at a student co-op in Berkeley. We got there super late. People started to leave because they thought all music was over. So, we set up super quick in this kitchen, our backs to the fridge and sink, started to play and all hell broke loose. The wood floor was slick with beer, water, liquor, I don't know. People started slip-sliding from one end to the other, which soon turned into a human bowling game. Everyone screaming and spilling stuff and knocking each other over, complete chaos in this kitchen. When we finished, they started chanting "BAUS, BAUS, BAUS." It was incredible. We had a similar experience on our first tour in Canada. We love house shows!

The worst: As for the worst show, we definitely have had our handful, whether it had been horrible promoters, not getting paid, stolen equipment, car trouble. All the classic band woes. But in the end, we always seem to come back together and keep going. I honestly feel like we've had more equipment stolen than anyone I've ever met haha! And we just replace them with even shittier amps and low-cost guitars. It works for us! I think every band should experience a shitty show every now and again. It's humbling and brings members together in that we are a punk band that fucks up sometimes kind of way.

MRR: There's big changes going on, and I know you don't know what's next but what do you anticipate for Baus?

Mike: We still have a lot of recorded music that we did with Andy Oswald that's not released, so we're going to work on that. Of course, we are all moving away from each other but...

Thomas: The first thing we're going to try to do is get someone to put out this record. But in terms of future of the band, we love this band so much and it's been such a part of our lives, and I have no doubt we are going to figure out a way a way to continue to play music together. It might not be the weekly thing that we were doing earlier this year and the year before but it will still be a big part of our lives. And I have no plans to do anything else! I'm moving and I just want to kind of live through the next two years and get back down to California and continue to just doing this, because this is what I have. This is all I've got. And this is what I have to live for. I've made sacrifices and I did a lot of things, and I don't regret all of it. There's a lot of stuff I could have done better. But I did those things specifically because this is what I wanted to do, I wanted to be in this band, I wanted to play music with these people. This isn't something that I could just give up.

MRR: It's like a relationship, right?

Sierra: It is. We are each other's worst enemies and best friends.

Mike: We've had some hard times on the road, but every time we come back home we're always longing for each other, just to be back! [*laughter*] It's so silly how we get through it all, it's a great feeling. It can be so hard to travel and show people what we've created and have this great experience where they like what we've created, even though we're struggling at the same time. There's a total payoff on that. And we're always at each other's necks but I think the two things that Baus has are chemistry and unconditional love. And people see that. I hear it in our music and honestly it would be hard to stop even if we live across the country. We'll probably still be talking about the next time we can travel again and create music.

Sierra: As long as there's people who want to listen to what we're playing then we're just going to keep on going.

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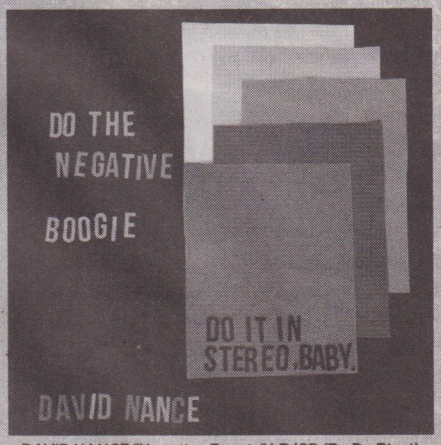

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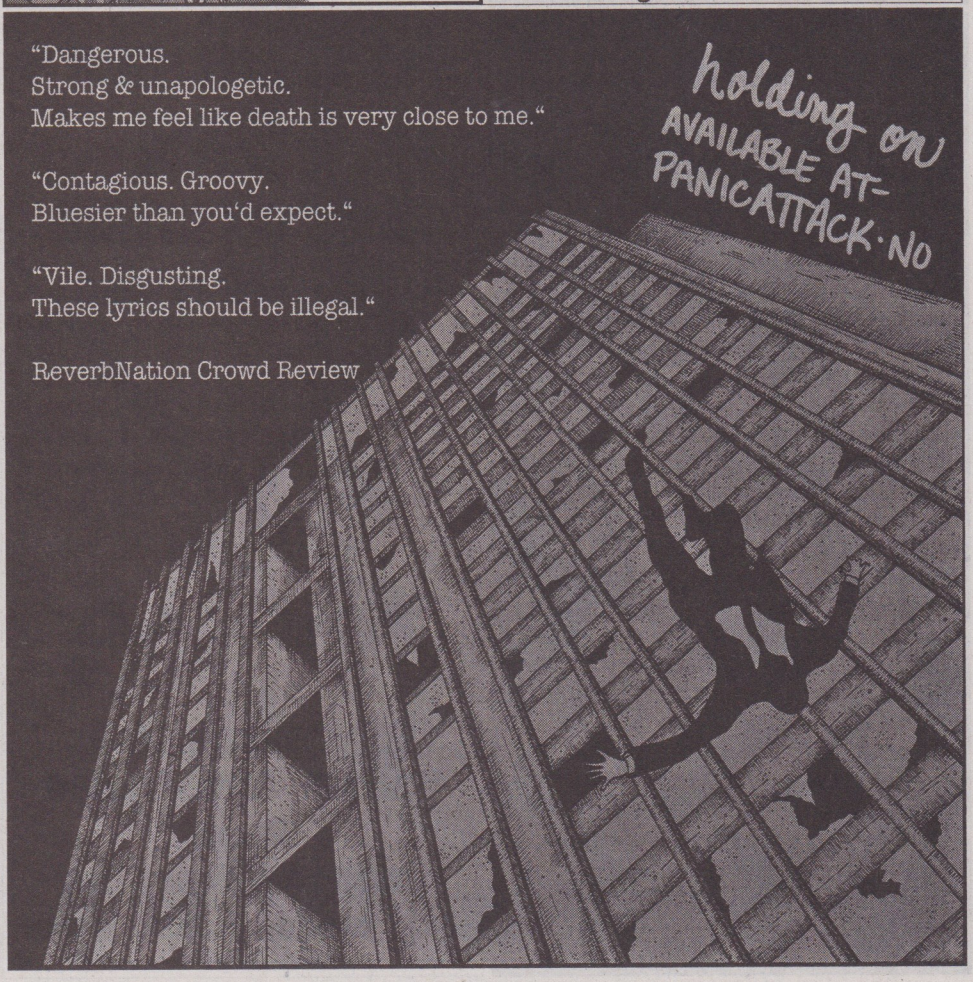

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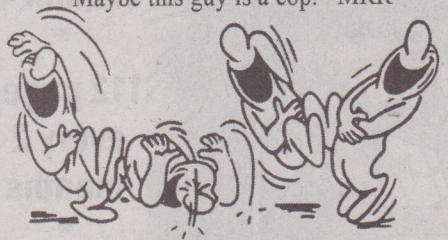

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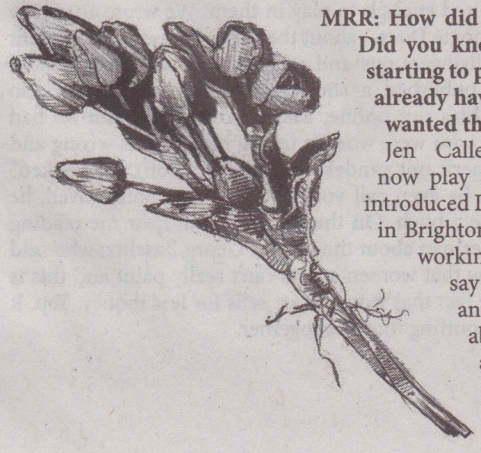
FEATURE

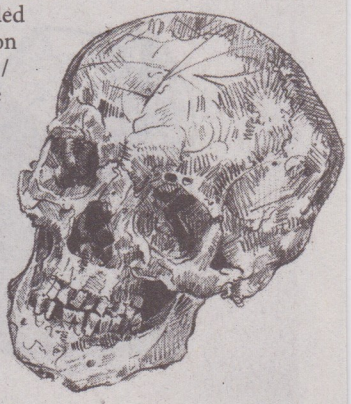
The band formerly known as Feature played their last show in summer 2015. The twosome turned threesome called it quits as guitarist Liv resettled in Sheffield, and they've been sorely missed ever since. I became pals with them when they asked me to make a video for their song "Wisdom Teeth" from their split EP Tourists *with Slowcoaches (Unwork Records, 2014), and we took to gallivanting around Islington to try and make a moody, but tongue in cheek music video about Jen's strange hands, an in-joke pushed to its furthest reaches. Slowcoaches bassist and singer Heather Perkins joined Feature in March 2014, when two became three, accompanying previously mentioned Liv Willars (guitar, vocals) and Jen Calleja (drums, vocals). Feature's posthumous record* Banishing Ritual *was just released on Upset the Rhythm.*

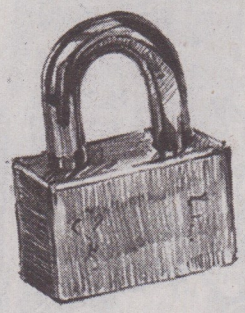
Interview and introduction by Maria Cecilia. Photos by Owen Richards. Illustrations by Richard Phoenix.

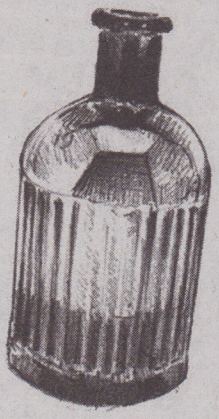


MRR: How did Feature come to be? Did you know each other before starting to play together? Did you already have an idea of how you wanted the band to sound?

Jen Calleja: Richard, who I now play in Sauna Youth with, introduced Liv and me at a zine fair in Brighton, where we were both working retail jobs. We would say hi every now and then and joke in a sincere way about starting a band and to seal the deal we started going on "gig dates" together. One of the first was John Maus, I think. We both ended up moving to London—like a lot of Brighton friends / bands were doing around 2011 / 2012—and started the band. Vision Fortune were playing a lot around then, and Cold Pumas, so those were our motoric starting points, along with our natural impulses to sing and our limited playing ability at the time. We really liked Heather's band Slowcoaches from Sheffield and she joined a couple of years after we'd been going as a two-piece when she moved to London.

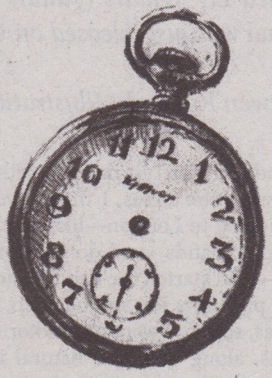






MRR: Had either of you been in any bands previously to Feature?
Jen: I started my first band at university with some friends, I played drums and did backing vocals. We played a handful of shows. I also played drums and sang in the band that would later morph into Omi Palone.
Liv Willars: I had a band throughout my teens (playing guitar / vox), which started out as part of a youth program to encourage local kids to try out an instrument and start a band (similar to the First Timers events that takes place in London now). It opened up this world beyond school which was life altering—we discovered Riot Grrrl and punk and probably sounded pretty terrible, but I loved it. I later filled in for friends' bands and joined a few others, but Feature was the first band since my teens that felt totally freeing.

MRR: Do you feel the music changed once Heather joined the band? After she joined you went on quite a few tours didn't you? Did you ever tour as a two-piece?
Jen: I think having a fuller sound made us more confident and it spurred us on to play more shows. We went on tour with Slowcoaches and solo too, and did a stream of long weekends away playing around the UK. We played out of London as a two-piece, but we became more active as a three-piece I guess.
Liv: As Jen says, having a third addition to the band definitely pushed us to play more, especially outside of London. I'd previously used a splitter pedal and the sound never felt as full as we wanted it to, it was great to finally get a more powerful sound live.



MRR: Could you tell us a bit about your lyrics? Do you write them together? What usually influences them?
Jen: I wrote most of the lyrics. They're almost always inspired by things that either anger, intrigue or disturb me, in a political and personal sense. We've previously written about how the *Culture of the Copy* EP—named after a book about doubles / copies—was inspired by embodiment theory. The book looks at how illness, viewing yourself on screen, gender, sexism and other things can create feelings of alienation from your self—sometimes in a dark way, sometimes in a fun way. We re-recorded a couple of songs from that for the album.

My favorite song on the album is "Gatekeeper" which is partly about Andy Copping, the booker of Download Festival, who, when he was asked why there were so few women musicians playing the festival, said that women just wanted to watch bands and weren't inspired enough to play in them. We wrote an article together—on Google Docs—about the various ways his argument was false and disingenuous and posted it on our website, and then *Pitchfork* published a shortened version of it. You also helped calling him out online, Maria, so at one point he had four musicians who were women telling him he was wrong and he used the "merit not gender—be shit, you don't get booked" schtick. Didn't he even call you a bitch at one point? Well, he called someone a bitch. On the song you can hear me reading an article in German about the painter Georg Baselitz, who said in an interview that women artists can't really paint and this is proven by the fact that women's art sells for less money. Yep. It was cathartic putting that one together.

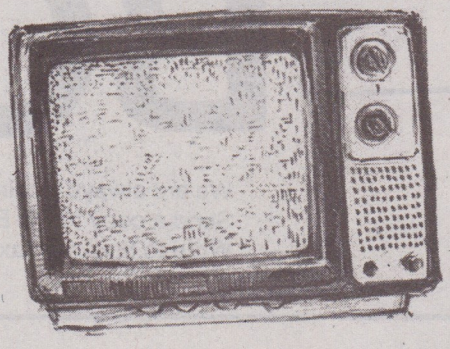
MRR: Yeah, I believe he called me a "fucking twat"when I questioned him about that statement...Very mature and professional. It would be great to highlight some female / non-binary musicians you're into as a bit of an equalizer. Who are your favorites right now and why?
Both: There are so many to list, but from recent gigs...Crumbs from Leeds, Nachthexen from Sheffield, Es and Witching Waves from London, Pega Monstro from Lisbon, Sacred Paws from London / Glasgow...All of them have a very powerful stage presence, and play music that feels personal and raw and passionate; the kind of show you come away from and can't stop thinking about afterwards…

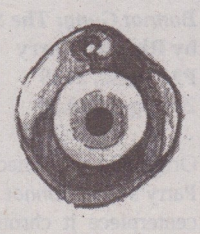
Also Joey Fourr, they sang on a couple of songs on the album. Joey put us on early in Feature's life and we played with them a lot, they're the best. There's also Ravioli Me Away, Not Sorry (which includes Rosie from RMA and Joey Fourr), Rattle from Nottingham, and Daudyflin from Reykjavik.

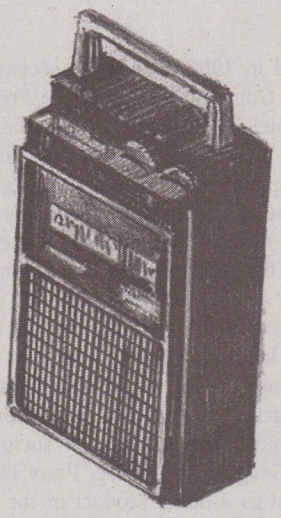
MRR: What are you both working on musically at the moment?
Liv: I have a new band in Sheffield with Donna from Nachthexen—so new it doesn't have a name yet!
Jen: Sauna Youth just recorded a third album. I do vocals in a newish band called Gold Foil with Tom from No / Gloss Rejection and *you*, Maria, of Es / Primetime, and up until recently Jack from the Worms / Omi Palone. I'm taking over on bass from Jack—even though I haven't played bass in a band before. And I'm drumming in a new band called Mind Jail with Jamie from Pale Angels / the Arteries. We met when he drove Sauna Youth on tour around Europe last year. I intended to slow down on band stuff this year but the opposite has happened.

MRR: Haha, strange how that tends to happen, huh? How would you describe Feature for someone who hasn't heard you? Three words max from each of you please.
Jen: TUNEFUL BUT WEAPONIZED
Liv: NO LOVE SONGS

Listen at featureband.bandcamp.com.







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Bonnot Gang: The Story of the French Illegalists
by Richard Parry
PM Press, 2016
288 pgs | $18.99

Originally published in 1987, this is the second edition of Richard Parry's *The Bonnot Gang: The Story of the French Illegalists*. As a centerpiece it chronicles the history and exploits of the early 20th century individualist anarchist group that came to be popularly known as the "Bonnot Gang." Far more than that, though, the book offers an invaluable description and accounts of the tempestuous and oppressive years in Paris in the wake of the Paris Commune of 1871 through the anarchist "terror" of the 1890s and the unremitting labor strikes of the beginning of the 20th century, ultimately leading up to the onset of the first World War. It is as much a book about the Bonnot Gang as it is about the history of labor movements, anarchist factionalism, and the myriad factors leading up to the early rise of fascism in Europe.

Parry weaves together a narrative that impressively details the historical, philosophical, and tumultuous socio-political context in which the Bonnot Gang arose. Indeed, Parry treats the gang not as a separate entity, but as a direct product of the times in which they existed. Through detailing accounts of the trajectories of many of the key figures within the group, we find as a common denominator a shared deep resentment of an increasingly tyrannical ruling class that sought to exact capital gain through an ever-merciless exploitation of a growing and marginalized working class. Countless labor strikes were enacted only to be brutally suppressed, often resulting in numerous casualties, and with few exceptions, forced back into seemingly paralyzed submission. After the Paris Commune, where at least 10,000 communards were killed during Bloody Week, and countless others were deported with a sentence of forced labor at Isle Of Pines (one of France's colonial settlements in New Caledonia), suppression of anarchists and other radical groups throughout France was swift, heavy, and intense. Many of the individuals that would go on to be involved both centrally and along the periphery of the Bonnot Gang entered the world in the thick of this repressive climate. Of them, Parry states,

> "But one group of proletarians, at least, was not prepared simply to resign itself to this dominant atmosphere of defeatism. Instead they invested their struggle with an even greater fury—rather than be exploited they would refuse waged work, rather than be forced into poverty they would steal, rather than vote they would riot, rather than 'make propaganda' in the army they would refuse to do military service altogether, rather than complain about their situation they would take immediate direct action to improve it."

Much of the group found each other through the extensive social network that radiated out from *L'anarchie*, a Parisian anarchist journal that was started in 1905 by Albert Libertad. The journal had many well-known contributors, including the likes of Raymond Callemin (AKA Raymond La Science, who formed the Bruseels Revolutionary Group and co-published *Le Revolté* with Jean De Boe), Andre Lorulot, Émilie Lamotte, and Victor Serge, who, along with his lover Rirette Maîtrejean, would remain steadfast editors of the journal up until the trial and sentencing following the dramatic demise of the Bonnot Gang. In the early years, the individuals brought together through the journal remained highly organized and vigilantly active. Most of them lived together in various collectives and libertarian communes scattered throughout Paris and the nearby suburb of Romainville. Beyond shared politics and pursuits of idealism, the group embraced a lifestyle that revolved around *la vie naturelle* (the natural life), an approach that embraced a kind of stoic material simplicity, as well as health, mental aptitude, and at least a broad notion of free love. While many of those in the communes differed in their adherence and alignment with said parameters, it was nonetheless embraced by all as firmly anti-capitalist.

Many of those in the circle that had formed around *L'anarchie* became drawn to the individualist anarchist ideas of the German philosopher Max Stirner. Stirner's ideas of the liberated individual's ego ran within much of the same framework as that of Nietzsche's notions of the "superman" (much like his contemporary, a number of Stirner's ideas can be seen as highly problematic, but within this particular framework were seen as a potent rallying cry). In particular, they were drawn to his idea of the "liberation of an individual's desires." Put simply, the idea dictated the full pursuit of one's desires, as opposed to being subjected to the oppressive confines of the state, the church, and other bureaucracies that wield an arbitrary and submissive dictate of power. An entitlement of the will. In his book *The Ego and His Own*, Stirner declares "whoever knows how to take, to defend, the thing, to him belongs property." This was a philosophy of extreme self-interest, a full exercising of the unhindered will of one's ego. Of Stirner, Parry states,

> "In the struggle against the State, which every conscious egoist would be forced to engage in, Stirner distinguished between a 'Revolution,' which aimed at setting up an immutable new social order, and 'rebellion' or insurrection, a continuous state of permanent revolution, which set 'no glittering hopes on "institutions."' Stirner's rebellion was not so much a political or social act, but an egoistic one."

Some, such as Octave Garnier, embraced Stirner's ideas more fervently than others, which would ultimately cause the group to rift along substantial and defining lines. Nonetheless, a central ethos was in place that served as an essential catalyst in the forward movement of the group. Parry further places it within the greater context that the group was operating within,

> "Yet, if the illegalists found many of their thoughts and feelings reflected and articulated in this milieu, it was the particular oppressiveness of French society that provided a most fertile soil for these ideas to take root. The illegalists

> were proletarians who had nothing to sell but their labour power, and nothing to discard but their dignity; if they disdained waged work, it was because of its compulsive nature. If they turned to illegality it was due to the fact that "honest toil" only benefited the employers and often entailed a complete loss of dignity, while any complaints resulted in the sack; to avoid starvation through lack of work it was necessary to beg or steal, and to avoid conscription into the army many of them had to go on the run."

In the annals of criminal history, the Bonnot Gang hold rank at the vanguard of enterprising material criminality at the dawn of the 20th century. Prior to the media coinage of "The Bonnot Gang," they were most often referred to as "The Auto Bandits," due to their (largely unprecedented) use of a stolen car as their mode of transit during their exploits. Cars were still fairly uncommon at the time, owned almost exclusively by the wealthiest margins of society. As such, the expropriation of motorized vehicles went beyond measures of mere logistical advantage. It was a glaringly bold and symbolic move that remained attuned to the ethos and politics that seeded the formation of the group. For more daring and public exploits, they would intentionally stake out cars such as limousines and Delaunay-Bellevilles, vehicles so obviously totemic in that they were solely utilized by royalty and the upper echelons of bourgeoisie society. As Parry states, "…the theft alone of such a car was, for the illegalists, a radically conscious gesture." Beyond that, on a note of sheer practicality, the Parisian police force weren't yet provided with automobiles, giving the outlaws a distinctive upper hand. Interestingly, police at the time were, by and large, not armed with guns, which gave the automatic-revolver wielding bandits another substantial upper hand.

A noteworthy distinction between the Bonnot Gang and so many of the well-known depression-era outlaw gangs in America is that the actions undertaken by the Bonnot Gang were undeniably rooted in politics. While some individuals within the gang—particularly Octave Garnier and those more firmly enmeshed in the extremes of the Stirner camp or individualist milieu—may have had their own survival and personal gain as primary motivations, their organization and directives were nonetheless rooted in a desire to fiercely combat and dismantle the structures of an increasingly oppressive state and society as a whole. Prior to some of the more notorious exploits of the gang, they would carry out meticulously planned robberies and actions that targeted those public figures most directly responsible for and associated with poverty and exploitation of the greater working class. The monetary gains gleaned from such actions would be used directly to fund other collective anarchist projects and endeavors.

Parry neither glamorizes nor condemns the varying actions undertaken by either the central figures within the gang or others that, while certainly associated with the group, acted, often with a reckless impulsivity, on their own accord. The legacy of the Bonnot Gang, much as the individuals of which it was comprised, is appropriately complicated. The temporal and geographic context provide a clear and illustrative landscape where the question of what gave rise to their existence and rapid proliferation seems almost self-prophesied. While it might seem easy to root for the cop killing underdogs undertaking bold and assertive moves to both gratuitously mock and deliver an emphatic *fuck you* to aristocratic society as a whole, it can also be similarly difficult to swallow some of the more brutal and unapologetically violent acts that sectors of the group made purely out of self-interest and personal gain (read: also, highly materialistic and capitalistic in pursuit).

One area in which the book felt unfortunately lacking was in a more thorough discussion of the women involved. The early lives, influences, proclivities, ethics, temperaments, and the like of the more familiar figureheads of the group (i.e. Jules Bonnot, Octave Garnier, and secondarily Victor Serge) are discussed at impressive length and depth. What of the Mahé sisters, though, who were integral in co-founding the individualist anarchist journal *L'anarchie*? Or Judith Thollon, who was Bonnot's lover and was ultimately sent to prison for harboring much of the money and tools from the group's exploits? Marie Vuillemin is recognized foremost as the lover of Garnier, and indeed managed to barely escape with her life during the siege in the Parisian suburb of Nogent, where both René Valet and Garnier were killed after a dramatic and lengthy shootout with the police led the frustrated militias assembled to ultimately use one-and-a-half kilos of melanite to blow up the building in which the two were holed up. Vuillemin, however, was an active anarchist along the same timeline, and was arrested several times for her involvement and association with anarchist groups, steadfast in her refusal to ever talk to the police. Anna Dondon undeniably played a central role in the workings of the Bonnot Gang, having been involved from early on in the circle that developed around *L'anarchie* following three years she spent in prison for counterfeiting. Parry doesn't ignore these figures by any means, but considering the depth at which details are given for the prominent male figures that comprised the group, the disparity is palpable, and the reader is left with only partial renderings of the lives of the women involved. Parry, however, is quick to point out the manifestations of gender imbalance within the group. He notes, "traditional masculine and feminine roles still exerted a pervasive influence regardless of the anarchist belief in free love." Similarly, "whether bourgeois, worker, or 'rebel,' the activity of the man was still very much the focus of attention". Inasmuch perhaps resides the reason for such a lopsided legacy.

All in all, this is a fantastic read, and an impressive documentation of a number of intersecting, powerful forces that arose almost synchronously amidst highly turbulent and seismic times. It's also an important yet often overlooked chapter of anarchist history. Parry narrates the saga of the Bonnot Gang without traces of bias, sentimentality, or excessive judgment, and effectively illuminates the far bigger pictures that emerged surrounding and ultimately sculpting their sensational and explosive emergence onto the world's stage.

"…They all agreed on one thing—this society held no future for them."

—Morgan Stickrod

Finally Got the News:
The Printed Legacy of the U.S. Radical Left, 1970–1979
Brad Duncan and Interference Archive
Common Notions Press
250 pgs | $27.95

The traditional historical telling of 1960s activism is pretty well summarized in the subtext of former activist Todd Gitlin's 1987 book on the period, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage.* In books like Gitlin's, the early to mid 1960s are championed, held up as examples of the positive changes that come from activist efforts to reform our existing society and ensure varied peoples' abilities to participate within it. These years are so valorized that what came after is often maligned and thus, under-discussed. These are the days of rage. The period in which activists fed up with the establishment's failure to end the war in Vietnam and address systemic racism in a meaningful way embraced political philosophies such as Marxism and Anarchism. Formerly liberal activists began to work towards overthrowing the government rather than reforming it. Unfortunately, most studies of this massive shift towards radical politics among U.S. activists end in 1969, as if the ideas of the period simply ceased as the decade came to a close. Yet, anyone who has spent any time in Berkeley's People's Park or gone to a MOVE rally in West Philadelphia knows this to be untrue. Ideas do

not start and stop like the days of the year. Luckily for us, *Finally Got the News: The Printed Legacy of the U.S. Radical Left* seeks to extend this timeline into the 1970s and tell us what happened next.

In the introduction to this collaborative effort between political ephemera collector Brad Duncan and Brooklyn-based Interference Archive, Duncan describes a desire to understand what happened to activists involved in the radical left of the 1960s and what types of political projects they involved themselves in after the decade's end. In pursuit of answers, Duncan began collecting old newspapers, flyers, and broadsides, all the while piecing together a narrative regarding how the left kept developing into the 1970s. *Finally Got the News* collects some of Brad's most beautiful and fascinating pieces to showcase the diverse array of causes and groups that made up the 1970s Left. The book also includes fascinating essays written by both movement historians and participants, giving context to the images that the book provides. For those who missed the recent exhibit at Interference Archive upon which the book is based, *Finally Got the News* is a real treat.

Each chapter of the work is devoted to a different strain of activism to which participants devoted themselves, including women's liberation, majority People of Color organizing committees, labor activism, queer liberation, prison and police abolition struggles, and solidarity efforts with Global South revolutions. These chapters show that activists in the 1970s did not simply continue with the same tactics and goals of the 1960s, but built upon them and pushed them forward.

One place where I really picked up on this was in the chapter on labor activism entitled "In the Factories and in the Streets: Going to the Working Class." The flyers and newspapers found in this chapter detail a period in which communist groups like the Socialist Workers Party, the Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist), the International Socialists, and others moved to Detroit and other industrial centers en masse, joined unions, and worked to radicalize shop floors in hopes of fomenting revolutionary struggle. During this period, groups like the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, a Marxist-Leninist, Black Power organization formed in the aftermath of the 1967 Detroit rebellions, organized Black workers in the city's auto plants and pushed for egalitarianism. The group's struggles and successes are detailed through various images throughout the book.

For me, the chapter's images gave new meaning to various sites of familiarity within my life. Fremont, California was not just a strip mall-centric suburb, but a site in which the Black Panthers formed a caucus within the city's United Auto Workers union in order to radicalize the Bay Area's Black workers. The North Philly post-industrial neighborhood of Kensington was once the epicenter of the Marxist October 4th Organization's efforts to organize an anti-sexist, anti-racist alternative to the conservative politics of the city's union leadership. The colorful broadsides and grainy newsprint images within the book bring these forgotten struggles to life and perhaps help the reader to approach their own city's geography with new sets of eyes.

As the work also importantly shows, the 1970s comprised a period in which anti-imperialist, pro-revolutionary politics became center-stage. The decade's activists did not solely oppose the Vietnam War, but actively identified with the Vietnamese communist forces with which the United States was at war. Leftists' interest in foreign revolutionary struggles in Nicaragua, Zimbabwe, and Angola, which featured women as guerrilla fighters and visible challenges to white power structures, offered activists new examples of anti-racist and anti-sexist activism worth emulating and supporting. As information on developing guerrilla struggles was often suppressed by the oppressive power structures of the Global South, U.S. pamphlets and leftist publications on these struggles became an important avenue through which activists became informed of revolutionary efforts abroad. Groups like Comite de Solidaridad con el Pueblo de Nicaragua de New York y New Jersey, Indochina Solidarity Committee, and Union of Democratic Filipinos' papers became important sources for involving oneself in the solidarity struggles of the 1970s. As *Finally Got the News* shows, the political struggles of the 1970s were not solely confined to the shop floors and city streets of the United States, but spread across the globe in support of numerous, simultaneous revolutionary struggles.

The genesis and evolution of radical political movements are stories possessing wide-appeal to those interested in modern-day politics. Yet, the importance and excitement comprised within these events are often obscured by the image-less texts and academic language of history books. *Finally Got the News* takes readers inside the archives, showing off the colorful, provocative images that inform our history books. Through the printed ephemera of Brad Duncan's extensive collection, an activist in 2017 can experience the politically charged present of the 1970s first hand. One can now bear witness to the grainy, intricate, alluring flyers and newsletters that brought activists out to protests and into political movements. *Finally Got the News* reminds us of the importance of independently produced, print media in our own political movements both as an organizing tool and as a way of allowing activists to speak for themselves outside the realm of the corporate-controlled media. It is in this sense that the images provided in *Finally Got the News* feel just as vital to our present as they may have when they were originally distributed on Xeroxed flyers at a rally in 1974.

— Keith Riley

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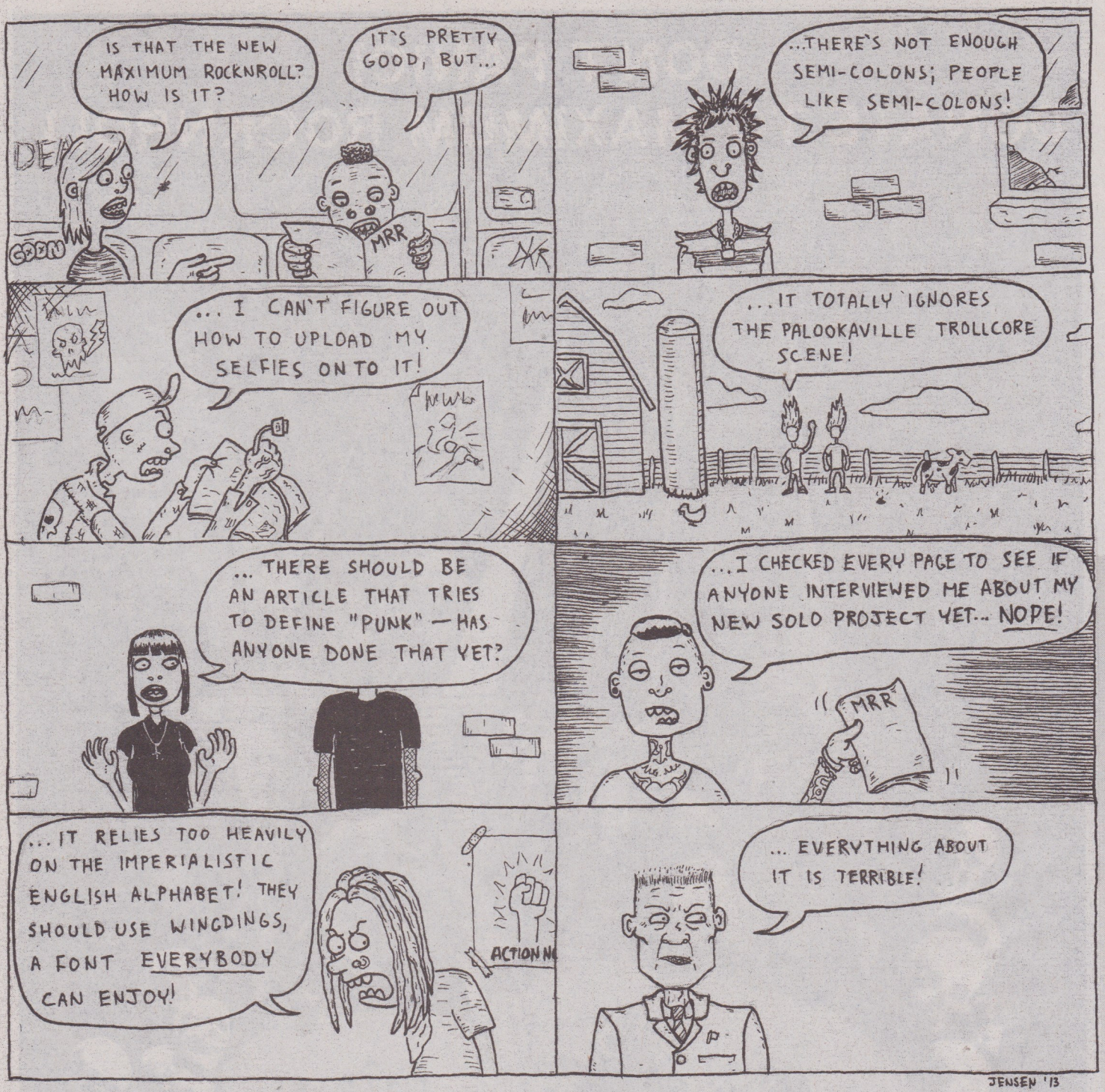

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ABORTTI 13 – "Kansa Taisteli" EP

Long-running (since '83) Finnish hardcore band with their sixth release since their reformation. Nine mostly raging hardcore punk songs benefitting from the same reckless spirit I feel when I listen to TERVEET KÄDET. A couple above-average tracks and a slow burner at the end, but the most memorable thing about this EP is the tiniest lyric sheet I've ever seen. (MA)
(Colditz)

ABSOLUT – "Demo 2013" EP

Well, shit. This was fucking great when it came out as a demo tape and it's still fuckin' great now. Super passionate, driving D-beat with crazy leads and tons of reverb on the vocals. Think *Criminal Trap*-era ANTI CIMEX with Japanese hardcore leads and some of the most bleak, desperate vocals this side of MAQUINA MUERTA. Everything this band released was absolutely great (no pun intended) and it's shocking to remember that this recording is their very first because it is a complete, fully-realized vision of what the band was and would continue to be. Fortunately the vinyl release doesn't clean up the sound too much—the recording is still raw and immediate, highlighting the band's energy and attack. Classically punk minimalist artwork rounds out the package. If you've got the original tape, throw it on and remember how fucking great this band is. If not, grab a copy of this EP immediately! (AU)
(Schizophrenic)

ANTISEEN – "The Complete DRASTIC Sessions" LP

Massive pile of ANTISEEN reissues this month, but luckily I get the 1984 debut. So much can (and has been) said, but you cannot deny this band's place on the map. This one is worth resurrecting if only for the opening screamer "Queen City Stomp." This first session (the LP includes the *Drastic* EP and seven outtakes, most of which are seeing the light for the first time here) shows ANTISEEN teetering between the gruff redneck punk they've become (in)famous for and blistering hardcore right out of the gate...and like much of their output, sometimes it works and sometimes not so much. The more "melodic" numbers (though I hesitate to use that descriptor; I'm talking about the times Jeff tries to sing) like "She's Part Of The Scene" and "Absent Minded" are straight up clunkers, but when these dudes want to get wild ("The Witch," "Antiseen," the prophetic "Destructo Rock") the result is just as fierce 30-plus years later as it must have been in 1984. There's a difference between a band I like and a band that I think is important, but sometimes those paths cross, and I'm happy that this reissue fell into my lap, though I can't imagine this batch of wax is going to convert the doubters. (WN)
(TKO)

ANTISEEN – "Honour Among Thieves" LP

I confess: despite hanging out with the world's number one ANTISEEN fan, Mr. Bruce Roehrs (RIP), many times, I have never knowingly listened to an ANTISEEN record. This reissued LP, originally recorded in 1985, is apparently some of their earliest material. I can see the attraction immediately: raw punk rock'n'roll played with noise and abandon, backing up a gritty vocalist that sounds like a Southern Lemmy. What's not to love? Well, the lyrics mainly but if you imagine you're in a Roehrs headlock you can't hear the words and this becomes as fine a beer-drinkin' record as you'll find. Deee-luxe orange vinyl brought to you scum collectors by TKO. (AM)
(TKO)

ANTISEEN – "Ob-sti-nate" LP

This is *MRR*, so I guess I have to try to objectively review this. This sounds like big badass biker bar rock with goofin' lyrics that makes old men chortle back at each other knowingly. Amazing that they've kept this joke running for over 30 years. Kudos! (GB)
(TKO)

ANTISEEN – "We're # One!" 12" EP

I have to say I'm not so stoked on an ANTISEEN without the late Mighty Joe Young. It can just never match up. That aside I'll take this new lineup on its own merits. This is a nice little package of four all new songs on color vinyl with a bitchin' comic book included. At least they got Mad Brother Ward of SCREAMING STREET TRASH fame in the fold as new axemaster (keeping things in the family!) and he does an excellent job of recreating the patented Joe Young wall of fuzz and noise. "Fight Like Apes" kicks things off with a heavy metal cruncher in keeping with the band's longstanding *Planet of the Apes* lust. "The Favors Are Over" starts with a squeal of feedback that warms this black heart and rips right into a tune that would be right at home on *Drastic* and is the best on this record. Jeff Clayton's vocals sound as strong as

ever. You get some of their usual goofy southern drawled spoken bits at the end of both sides that I could take or leave but pretty funny. "Lo-Fi" is a great Southern boogie punker to get you dancing' or smashin' and we finish up with "Cousin Eddy" which is the best example of "Fuck All Y'all" they've pulled off in quite awhile. Fucking impressive. Mighty Joe is smiling his ass off in Hades. (RO)
(TKO)

ARRASTRADXS BAJO UN CIELO / CIUDAD DEL KAOS – split EP

All I can say after hearing these two Chilean bands is holy shit! If you want to know what crust is all about, this is it! ARRASTRADXS BAJO UN CIELO peels off your face with pure intensity that does not even think about giving you a second of respite. Lightning fast D-beat and non-stop thrashcore riffing are the last things you will hear before being dropped into the shredder…sick! CIUDAD DEL KAOS has a bit of a more heavy, metallic sound akin to early British grind rippers like EXTREME NOISE TERROR. It's raw, grimy and stinks like death—and I love it! Get this! (BA)
(self-released)

BAIN DE SANG – "We Are The Blood We Are The Fear" 12"

Ferocious French grind that leans more towards the introspective CELESTE end of the spectrum (as opposed to the purely brutal VOMIT FOR BREAKFAST end of the spectrum). "Watch Us Fall" is the fuckin' track (helped by the epic intro to "Hail To The Grief" that follows), but everything here bangs. Even when the hardcore parts get kinda burly and border on "bro" territory, BAIN DE SANG have an air of determination that seems to defy machismo. The hatred in "Ones You Hate Become Ghosts" is visceral and real...and those words pretty much sum up the intensity of the whole record. A minimally packaged one sided 12" that lets the contents speak for themselves—and they speak volumes. (WN)
(Dingleberry / Emergence)

BEARER OF BAD NEWS – CD

This CD EP is three songs of very basic, and very slow alternative rock, with distorted vocals. I can't decide if these guys sound like an extremely bummed out FU MANCHU or an Alternative Tentacles reject from the '90s. Either way, I'll pass. (BA)
(self-released)

BEAR TRADE – "Silent Unspeakable" LP

This definitely fits well within the confines of dude rock, with nods and tips o' the hat more towards LEATHERFACE than, say, your standard Fat fare. And you know what? I'm kind of a sucker for older punks with good lyrics (and this bloke's accent doesn't hurt). If you can handle tasteful chugga-chuggas, fast breaks, a few whoa-oh-ohs, and a cleaner production than the girth of your record collection, you should check this out. Hell, I hate the genre, and this is warranting a second listen. Songs about growing old gracefully, a little bit of drinking, tea, and smoking. I like it! (DZ)
(Dead Broke / Everything Sucks)

THE BLENDOURS – "No Respect" LP

Total Lookout! worship, and not in a bad way. I fucking love the male / female vocal harmonies, catchy hooks, and high energy. This is a great release for anyone interested in '90s pop punk —this shit is alive and well! Or at least was four years ago when this album was recorded. I'm not sure if this band is still around but this album is awesome. Really reminds me of bands like MTX, MUFFS, RIVERDALES, and GREEN DAY but with more energy. Also sounds like labelmates the CAPITALIST KIDS. (DB)
(Eccentric Pop)

THE BUG – "Humbug" EP

Hella hot leads on this new Chicago EP from the BUG. Guitarist sounds like he's closely studied the GERMS's "What We Do Is Secret" and the rest of the band let him get away with it in the studio. I don't know what to call this—maybe we've finally reached post-REATARD. That or take a heavy dose of '90s Gravity Recs. Whatever it is, they sound pretty pissed! (GB)
(IFB / Not Normal)

BUMMERTOWN – "No Going Home" 10"

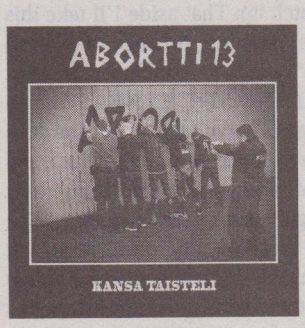
No Going Home is the initial polite whimper of a new, garage-y pop punk trio that really wants to shout. BUMMERTOWN do not feel comfortable in their skin yet, but there's a noticeable seed of something under that surface that just needs to grow. The final 45 seconds of "Headaches / Dig You Out" tickled my eardrums like I finally got a gift I'd been asking for at the last possible moment. This initial recording is not perfection, but it sure has me excited to see where they can go with this. (RH)
(self-released)

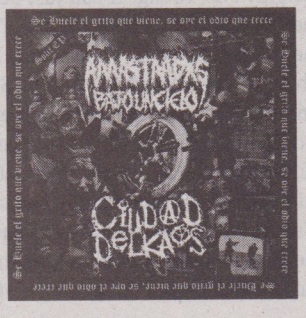
CAPITALIST KIDS – "Brand Damage" LP

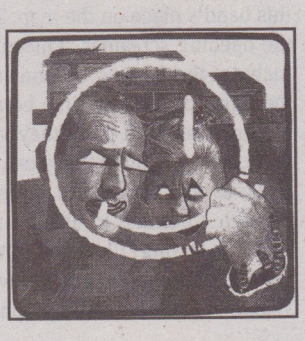
This is instantly special feeling pop punk condensed to its necessary essence so that only a couple songs barely break the two-minute mark. Who really needs extra minutes of repeating chorus when you've already made your point and have so much more to say? It's fast. It's fun. It's a little silly. With a few healthy doses of politics connecting everything together, this LP is a masterful collection that truly showcases the talent of every single member. CAPITALIST KIDS are an impressive group that you should keep an eye on. (RH)
(Brassneck / Eccentric Pop)

CATHERINE SCHWARTZ – 12"

French punkish alt rock that, frankly, falls short on all levels. The songs have so many parts and the instruments seem to be a bit off from each other much of the time. Sloppy can be charming, but not this time. The vocals seem so unenthusiastic that I don't see why I should care either. Only one side has music, while the other has a giant label containing lyrics. The sleeve is one thick paper sheet with a simple design and no info. I don't get it. (MA)
(Emergence)







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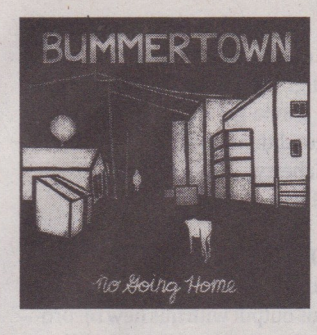
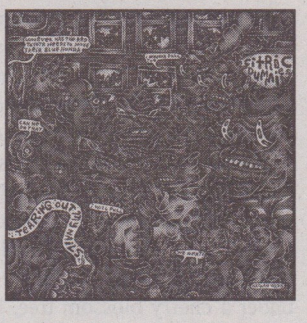




CAVES – "Always Why" LP

For what it's worth, during the first song of this LP I got up and opened the windows of my room to let the sun shine through for the first time today. It felt good. CAVES hail from both Bristol and Philadelphia and on this LP they play bustling, thick, fuzzy melodic punk in the vein of RVIVR, IRON CHIC, and even the BREEDERS. The lyrics are a mix of personal and political statements delivered with nothing but passion. Just a cursory dip into the band's back catalog has shown me that they've grown by leaps and bounds in the last few years. Each song is a thought out blast of emotion that is nothing but excellent. A great LP. (GH)
(Dead Broke / Specialist Subject / Yo-Yo)

CITRIC DUMMIES – "Tearing Out My Nails" LP

Oh wow, this shit is *Goofy* with a capital "G"…but it works! Minneapolis freak-o's play naturally distorted garage punk with a manic hardcore energy, channeling CAPTAIN 9'S & THE KNICKERBOCKER TRIO and the DICKIES (but not their misogyny). The raw recording quality suits the band really well. Fun, very literal, and over-the-top dumb songs with titles like "Someone's Living in the Bathroom (It's Me)," "Kill Everyone Who Drives," and "We're Gonna Borrow Your Gear (Tonight)". It's like a lost Sacramento band that Secret Center released in 1993 but you missed it because they didn't know how to handle mail order, but now here it is in 2017 with eighteen songs, none of them over a minute-and-a-half. Bonkers. (GH)
(Fashionable Idiots)

CLOACA / RECIDIVE – split EP

A very sick little hardcore record with lots of guitars and zero time to fuck around. Montreal's CLOACA plays extra thrashed out D-beat with some real tasty licks thrown in at just the right moments. France's RECIDIVE is also a thrashy hardcore band, but with less D-beat and more guitar shredding. The amps are cranked and the urgency is at eleven. Are you ready to rock? (BA)
(Ascenseur Emotionnel / Emergence / Histrion / Rata Tat Tat / Tourtasto DIY)

COLOUR BÜK – "Cosmic Nightmare" LP

Sometimes working with two competing ideas doesn't really pan out. COLOUR BÜK prove this with their latest LP. The tracks switch off, almost one to one, between sample laden instrumental pieces and pounding, simplistic, grunge tinged punk. The instrumentals are mostly spooky noise with some occasional skittery and isolated guitar, and are built around some sample, usually of a dude talking. The music is a little too rock'n'roll to be something on Total Punk, but it has the same primitive vibe as most of that stuff. Neither type of track detracts from the other, but they also don't build to a cohesive theme, like the NOLLS LP I reviewed some months ago did. If you're looking for some unaffected, pounding rock music, and some psychedelic interludes won't take the wind out of your sails, then I have a record for you. (LP)
(Wir Wollen Wulle)

COMPOSITE – "Artemisia" EP

Gothy post-punks COMPOSITE offer up six songs, and each one has a very simple and melodic earworm melody that they run with. These tracks are complete, compact and satisfying with sweet guitar riffs. I'd be hard pressed to find another comparison as apt as Shirley Manson of GARBAGE for Sami's vocals, which add a lightness to their dark sound. (CR)
(self-released)

CONFLICT – "Conclusion" LP

At first I sighed at the thought of reviewing a reissue of the *seventh* CONFLICT studio album, released in 1993. Upon dropping the needle I realized I used to have the CD version of this album—I just didn't recognize it because it had different cover art...and I already like it! It's kind of a long-winded listen (especially lyrically, duh), but I've always enjoyed the variety of styles they can pull off. There's even a pretty good ska-ish song ("No More Excuses") on here, which is something you'll *never* hear me say again! Fans of the band or UK anarcho-punk that never braved the later stuff: it's time you give this a try 'cause it holds up! (MA)
(PHR)

THE COWBOY – "The Cowboy Album" LP

Genius Midwestern guitar scrawl—somehow both savage and swaggering sounds from the wild minds of several HOMOSTUPIDS / PLEASURE LEFTISTS. It has the frenzied hate / joy that emanates from listening to the work of the HOMOSTUPIDS but with more expansive heartland muscular guitar sprawl that fans of RON HOUSE bands will respond to in a pleasing manner. HOMOSTUPIDS maniacs must seek this out immediately; too many hits to mention but look into "Peaceful Dreamer" and "Sneaking Leaker." The first song struck me wrong but once I pushed through the magic was apparent. Converted / obsessed. (LG)
(Fashionable Idiots)

CRUMBS – "Mind Yr Manners" LP

Clean and dreamy punk from Leeds, CRUMBS will have you begging for more with SUSAN-esque drunk vocals and groovy MODETTES-style bass walks in "Easels Can Wait" and "Chaka Can't." "Hankie Herbcock" has a true MARINE GIRLS feel and many of their heavier, slower songs like "Muster Point" evoke SLEATER-KINNEY's '90s alt tilt. It's all perfectly charming. (CR)
(Everything Sucks)

CRUTCHES – "SÅLD" LP

Echoing classic Scandinavian hardcore from Sweden, this is a solid offering of structured käng / mangel with metallic riffs, energetic breakdowns, and solos. Dual vocals filled with distress and snarling, alarming guitars and resonant drums. SKITSYSTEM, HUMAN WASTE—you know the drill. No bones about it, CRUTCHES stand on their own two feet as a powerful surge into the crusty D-beat cesspool. (JR)
(Not Enough)

THE DOMESTICS – "Cherry Blossom Life" LP

Straightforward hardcore punk from England. Seventeen blasts of aggression and in-your-face raw energy. This band would benefit from some better equipment, as the distorted bass hangs out alone in the mix and the guitar sounds like a practice amp. The recording overall is pretty treble heavy. Nevertheless, this would probably appeal to fans of MDC, STRUNG UP, or CORROSION OF CONFORMITY. The spoken word piece "Human Ikizukuri" is a cool throwback to '80s anarcho-punk. Lyrics about life's struggles, domestic violence, judgmental arseholes, and frustration. Looking at the cover art of traditional Japanese women under a cherry blossom tree, I never would have guessed the sounds contained within. The lyric sheet instructs you to "Stay punk, Stay DIY, Nazi punks fuck off." I can get down with that. (JC)
(Kangaroo / TNS)

THE DOMESTICS – "Pissing on Perfection" EP

Just my luck, it's my first exposure to this band and it's a fucking covers record. As these things go it's not bad, with a diverse selection of songs from the likes of GAUZE, ANGRY SAMOANS, OUT COLD, the FALL, and RUDIMENTARY PENI. I didn't like the RUDIMENTARY PENI cover, though to be fair I don't like any RP covers (with the exception of the DYSTOPIA cover of "Cosmetic Plague" on the *Whispers* compilation—look it up!), but their hardcore'd up cover of the FALL was quite good and the all-hardcore A-side is generally well-executed. I appreciated the almost apologetic liner notes explaining that the band had accumulated a handful of cover recordings from projects that fell through and needed an outlet for them. Great for fans, skippable for pretty much everyone else. (AU)
(Imminent Destruction / Kibou / Mangel Wax / Sickworld / TNS / Urinal Vinyl)

ED WARNER – "Meanwhile…Extinction" 12"

Eight labels collaborated on this release, and this is exactly the kind of record that needs and deserves that kind of communal support. It's not the kind of rager that one label would snap up; it's a solid, fun but ultimately not terribly memorable record made by some clearly enthusiastic punx. This French quartet deliver twelve tracks of mostly straightforward hardcore with a mild crust influence. The vocals are high-energy and the drumming is really solid, but the guitar tone is a bit wimpy and the bass is almost lost in the mix. In a live setting with a beer-slicked floor and high spirits I bet this band kills but the record is unfortunately only so-so. This is definitely the kind of record that you buy from the band when they play your town and you had a blast. (AU)
(A Monsters Tears / Black Death / Bonobo Stomp / Crapoulet / Dingleberry / Dirty Guys Rock / Emergence / Subzine)

ED WARNER / MENTAL DISTRESS – split EP

Tours versus Strasbourg! ED WARNER seem to have been around for longer and play the same kind of loosely throwback-y hardcore that CAREER SUICIDE do. That is to say, I want to say "'80s throwback hardcore," but in reality I can't finger who in the '80s was also playing that way. It's fun, and tight sounding but loose feeling with a dash of rock'n'roll. MENTAL DISTRESS are part fastcore, part DETESTATION (and not just because they have a very high pitched singer). They also wrote a song in the exact same lyrical phrasing as pretty much every DETESTATION song. We normally don't declare winners and losers with splits, but I'm gonna go ahead and call it for MENTAL DISTRESS. Both sides are good though. (LP)
(Bonobo Stomp / Crapoulet / Dingleberry / Dirty Guys Rock / Emergence / No Way Asso / Ratta-Tat-Tat)

ENDLESS GRINNING SKULLS – "Risus Sandonicus" LP

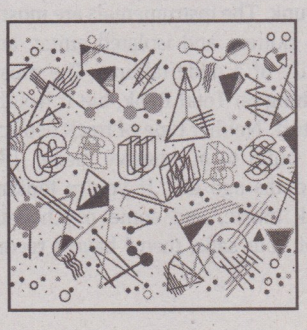
Holy shit, is this a full-on concept record? I think it is! This gang of UKHC lifers have surpassed their previous output with this new record—everything from the art to the lyrics to the playing are on a different level than their earlier works. Tackling the crushing pressures of life under the plutocratic governments of the West, ENDLESS GRINNING SKULLS offer up ten tracks of grinding (but not grindcore), sometimes disorienting and / or dissonant, but always compelling crusty hardcore. Built on the back of a rock solid rhythm section with remarkable drumming (fuck, get a load of them fills!) that allows vocalist / guitarist Andrew Morgan tons of space to experiment with riffs and vocal lines, this is by far the most interesting and progressive this band has ever sounded. There are hints of everything from RUDIMENTARY PENI to UNSANE to LOGICAL NONSENSE and HERESY in the mix. Couple that with the striking collage-style album art, especially in the gatefold, and the "Endtimes Gazette" insert and you have a fully-realized scream against the modern human condition. This is a huge, expansive album, dark in ways that goths wouldn't touch with a ten-foot pole. "The Pressures of Life" is like the horrifying negative of a CONFLICT epic, laying out the case for misery in the way that the peace-punk bands argued for hope. Look, this record isn't gonna help you sleep better at night, but it's fuckin' great and would be an eye-opener for even the most jaded among us. (AU)
(Viral Age)

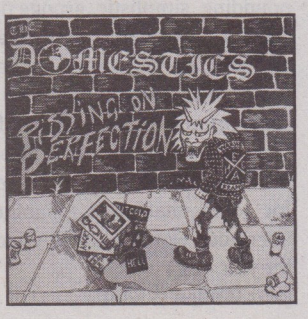
EVEN DWARFS – "Nuclear Generation" EP

Four songs, each a short, sharp shock of brittle dark punk. Sparse instrumentation and heavy use of echo conjure images of rain-slick, rat infested Copenhagen back streets. Thin, blank stare boys in overcoats loom in doorways and press demo tapes into the expectant hands of record label fat cats. Why not? (AM)
(Saudade)

EXIT-STANCE – "While Backs are Turned" LP

Absolutely essential '80s UK anarcho-punk. If you're unfamiliar, EXIT-STANCE brings a massive, massive sound with dark melodies and lyrics about animal rights, religion and greed. This reissue includes not only the 1985 *While Backs Are Turned* 12" on side A (and the shit still stinks!), but an entire side B of bonus tracks. EXIT-STANCE took the hardline anarchist sentiments and early '80s Crass Records sound in a darker direction. If you don't have it, save some bucks and pick up this reissue now. I'm just pissed this didn't come with a reviewer copy! (JC)
(PHR)





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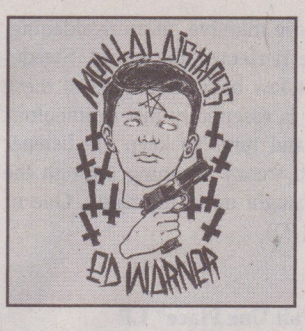
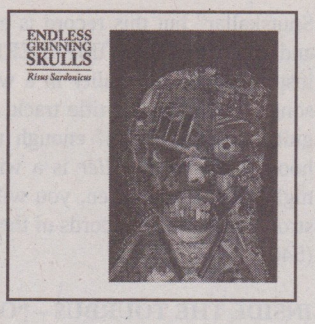
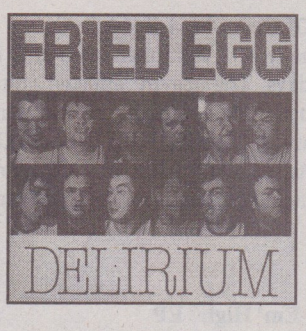






FLOWERS OF EVIL – "City Of Fear" LP

I like this record by these New York punkers a lot more than their last. A little more straight-up punk. A lot of the songs sound similar but whatever. Their singer has such a great snotty JOHNNY ROTTEN meets NICK BLINKO voice that shines out on the killer opener, "MTA," which is such a nihilistic little fucker and maybe my favorite on the record. They shy away from their previous post-punk tendencies except on a couple tunes like "Guilt Majority." They must have gotten hold of the right (or really shitty) drugs for this release because it is punk as fuck even while sounding a little too slick at times. SCREAMERS attitude, GERMS / CONSUMERS guitars, and COCKNEY REJECTS meets the FALL good time. Suck me. (RO)
(Deranged)

THE FOCKE WOLVES – "Blasto Maxxo" CD

This SoCal band cranks out punk rock'n'roll along the lines of the STOOGES, D GENERATION, and the HELLACOPTERS. There was a bigtime resurgence of this sound in the '90s—bands that were in your face guitar wise but being more rock or even borderline metal without being punk rock. This four-song release is well produced and the vocals are more in tune than screaming. This rocks alright and I'm sure there's a MOTÖRHEAD shirt or two at every one of their shows. (RL)
(Fasteroctane)

FRIED EGG – "Delirium" EP

FRIED EGG's second and best record. The first two songs are mid '80s POISON IDEA meets first NIHILISTICS LP type ragers, with the singer's slurred yet pissed rapidfire ranting backing up the hard-hitting guitar work and 1-2-1-2 drumming well. "Eggshells" is a midpacer that revolves around a couple of choice riffs with no less fury, before dramatically fading away. Hope they do another record this good or better. (DG)
(Negative Jazz)

FROZEN TEENS – "Hey Good Job" LP

This is a farewell collection of six leftover songs from a band that broke up in 2014. Expectedly, it's a little all over the place, some loud clangs here, some sudden guitar jerking there. If you have a particular interest in the Minneapolis scene and want to hear a former "next big thing" band that instead quit to go on with their lives, this is catered specifically to you. There is a highlight at least in the vocals, where you can hear the vocalist really trying and caring about what he's singing. It's too bad his passion didn't keep the band together. (RH)
(Dead Broke)

GBH – "Punk Junkies" LP

I'll always remember the time I saw GBH on Broadway and almost got killed for breaking the "wall of skins" formed by out of town yobbos on the dance floor. That was on the horrendous *Fridge Too Far* album tour and this band has been pretty spotty with their recorded output since, while getting it together with *From Here To Reality* to become a consistently solid live force. I've never heard this one from 1996 but I can't say I've missed much. Pretty fucking horrible metal punk that gets you going with Colin's great-sounding voice and that "City Babies" guitar sound and then degenerates into hollow drums, echoed goofy voiced choruses, and metal breakdowns. There isn't one solid punker on this record. I wish I'd taken a good boot to the noggin' way back when, leaving me deaf enough to skip this noise. (RO)
(PHR)

GEIGER COUNTER – LP

This grim little package will knock your stinky black socks off. Out of Minneapolis, they take cues from their fellow Twin Cities dwellers, and bring it all the way back to EXTREME NOISE TERROR and DOOM, and they do it with an intensity that makes it relevant now. Sometimes good crust is hard to find—this band is top notch! (BA)
(Desolate / Phobia)

GG King – "Another Dimension" EP

It's hard to describe what's so appealing about GG KING records. There's an otherworldly appeal that makes the sound transcend the normstorm garage / KBD klonekone scene. This 45 is no different; "Another Dimension" is a great doomed pop anthem, an earworm of a song that feels eternal and throwaway at the same time. It's followed by a spoken word interlude. Enough said. The B-side is one riff over and over that is relentless and falling apart on itself. Good enough to be an unreleased Dangerhouse Records 7", but also somehow an inside joke you will never get the scoop on. (LG)
(Scavenger of Death)

GHOSTED – "Swan Song / Heatwave"

Luscious shoegaze-y garage pop from Toronto band GHOSTED. Reminiscent of all things Slumberland, the vocals drip with SOFTIES sweet fuzz and both "Swan Song" and "Heatwave" are completely danceable and remarkably pleasant on the ears.(CR)
(Ugly Pop)

GLUE – LP

On their first 12", GLUE kicks out the type of high-protein, in-the-red crawly and stompy hardcore that they're known and loved for (even if all those damn T-shirts suggest they might not want to be), backed up by barked vocals that serve the overall sound well by being a little low in the mix. While nothing is a huge departure from their prior stuff, everything about this record is solid. The riffs and songwriting are ace, the vocal delivery accentuates everything, the knob-twiddling is well-placed, and the closer's transition from a hard rock song into a rabid hardcore finale is perfect. (DG)
(Glue)

GREENSLEEP – "Cheap Headphones" LP

Long Island indie rock, for fans of JAWBREAKER and SAMIAM, with solid songwriting and performances. The band's first release in eighteen years. (DB)
(Dead Broke)

HALDOL – "The Totalitarianism Of Everyday Life" LP

Bleak, apocalyptic doom sounds, the type of stuff often referred to as "dark punk" or "goth punk" these days. The heavily effected guitar squall skitters and stabs over pretty straight ahead, driving punk with angry, disaffected vocals. Fans of CRISIS, KILLING JOKE, early CURE, ZOUNDS, the MOB etc. should consult their GP about HALDOL at once. Side effects may include dyeing your hair black and smoking cloves. (AM)
(World Gone Mad)

THE HANGING JUDGE – "Hang Em' High" EP

Pretty mediocre Oi! with really annoying BAD RELIGION style guitar work that stays middle of the road politically while trying to be socially conscious starting with "Pawns": *"Left right left right / we all die."* The lyrics are intelligently written and the band can play but the singer's off time vocals and the endlessly noodling trebly guitar grates on me to the point of insanity. It just doesn't rock. At its best it reminds me of the WORKING STIFFS. At its worst it's just another cookie cutter Doc (not Gripfast) wearing modern anthemic Oi! band. (RO)
(Crowd Control Media)

HEAVY POCKETS – "Mopeless" LP

HEAVY POCKETS are pop punk, unabashedly, but more so in the style of Salinas Records. Wispy vocals, jangly guitar, and thick, overdriven bass. These songs feel like a more laidback TIGER TRAP, or Salinas's P.S. ELIOT, GATEWAY DISTRICT, or JOYRIDE! (LP)
(Cat Dead Details Later / Dead Broke)

HELLKNIFE / TACHELESS – "Decimated to Ashes / Shit Stained and Spreading Fear" split LP

A two for one special of grinding crust out of Germany. HELLKNIFE does some driving D-beat crust, with some ugly death metal pounding thrown in for good measure. The result is the guttural fury of total apocalypse…Yeah man! Next up is TACHELESS, who are along the same lines, but a little less gloomy and with a bit more grindcore thrashing. They're like a major catastrophe, rather than the end of times. This record shreds, so check it out! (BA)
(self released)

ILLYA – "In Adversity…" EP

Powerful, hard-driving, and melodic Japanese hardcore with blazing leads reminiscent of somewhere between PAINTBOX and ACIDIC SOIL throughout, high praise due at any point on that spectrum. The vocals are a sharp, biting, and distorted attack that give ILLYA an edge that's impossible to ignore. Even on the mid paced anthemic opus "The Polar Star," Yokoyama's screams take complete control and add an ever present intensity. Killer slab, advanced sounds. (WN)
(SPHC)

IMPALERS – "Cellar Dweller" LP

Holy *fuck*! IMPALERS just keep getting better and better. I never thought they'd be able to top their ten-minute D-beat opus "Psychedelic Snutskallar" but this record is even more massive, more maddening, and more abrasive! IMPALERS have perfected the art of Swede-inspired D-beat brutality in a way that few have. Each one of these songs (including the title track, which is essentially just a ridiculous guitar solo) is full of enough twists and turns to keep the listener hooked. *Cellar Dweller* is a wild-eyed frenzy storming through the night, and if you listen, you will get caught up in its mania. One of strongest hardcore records of the year. (JD)
(540)

INSIDE THE TOURBUS – "On Se Fait Une Place" LP

Apparently this French band finds traveling in a tour bus very inspiring. Hyper anthemic street punk / Oi! with lots of *"hey-yoooooo"* melodic vox, and a couple of heavy mosh parts. This LP is one-sided with an elaborate silkscreened B-Side, but don't worry, they managed to squeeze seven tracks on it… (GB)
(Emergence)

JIM JONES & THE RIGHTEOUS MIND – "Supernatural Mind" CD

Shitty, god awful, blues rock. The singer tries to sound like the bad parts of David Lee Roth, Tom Waits, and even Nick Cave. The really bad parts. This is fucking garbage, even for you modern rock cats. This CD was sent by their PR company. Fucking haircuts. (DZ)
(Hound Gawd)

AL KARPENTER – "The Chosen One" EP

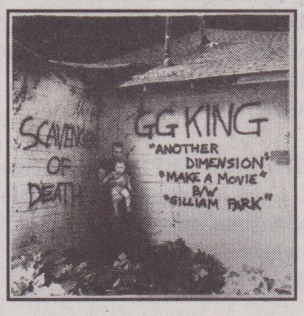
From the wild shores of Bilbao comes the doomed sound of AL KARPENTER, an archaic nightmare of guitar shards and shuffling / piercing / shambolic rhythms to unnerve and insinuate. Dog barks and a yowling man, which is which? Sort of like listening to a middle aged one-man band cover TEENAGE JESUS AND THE JERKS, that sort of primal macho energy that LYDIA LUNCH eats for breakfast. Fans of BILLY BAO might find their appetites whetted. (LG)
(Munster)

KATASTROF – "Falska Leenden" EP

Poffen and Martin from INSTITUTION doing the greatest possible kind of Swedish D-beat imaginable (in 2017). This record is bonkers! How Poffen still has a voice is beyond me. This EP a like a condensed "best of TOTALITÄR tricks" but with a couple burning solos thrown in, which is to say it fucking rips! There's even a Motör-charge-ish intro on "Bryt Bort Hakarna," kinda how SKITKIDS woulda done it. I still think TOTALITÄR effectively used up all the greatest chord combinations and riffs, but I will gladly welcome records like this for as long as these guys make them! (MA)
(Beach Impediment)

KLIMAX – "Ääri/päät" LP

KLIMAX did two awesome demos in the mid '80s chock-full of catchy bouncy hardcore punk. Here they've taken a major step toward pop (even some emo?), both in production and writing. They still have the fast and bouncy elements but the vocals and guitars are all melody. While most of this



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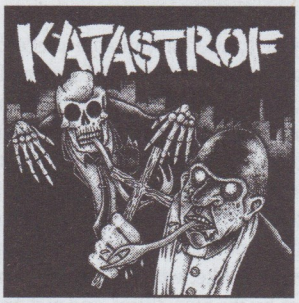


is a bit too pop rock sounding to me, the passion comes through, and the track "Linjalla" stands out as an undeniably catchy and enjoyable tune. (MA)
(Höhnie / Kämäset Levyt)

LION SLICER – LP

Hardcore punk from Wisconsin that brings to mind '90s Midwest crust like CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE. The songs are a little all over the place and disjointed and parts seem sort of thrown together, but I do like that they seem to be doing their own thing and don't realy give a fuck. There's even a blastbeat or two thrown in for good measure, some wah-wah guitar solos, and china crash. Still unsure of what a lion slicer is. (JC)
(self-released)

LIQUIDS – "Hot Liqs" LP

This band has so many goddamn records and tapes out that I can't keep track. This is the US pressing of their LP that came out last year, which I believe has re-recorded tracks from earlier tapes. This band is Mat and Mark from CONEHEADS showing that they have writing note-perfect trashy garage punk down to a science. My mind is blown by these songs. How the fuck do they crank out so many songs that are *this fucking good*? Sixteen songs, not a boring moment in the bunch, and each one forms a dot somewhere on the continuum between "songs for slamming and raising hell with your friends" and "songs for making out to." Despite a general energetic and mid-paced pattern, there's plenty of variance in tempo and idiosyncrasies in songwriting as well. (DG)
(Hip Kid / Not Normal)

LONG GONE / VEGAS – split EP

Two heavy-duty bands out of Finland dishing out some seriously mean hardcore. LONG GONE sounds like they have been listening to the CRO-MAGS. They have the thrashed out riffs and the slightly unhinged vocals that make early NYHC so sick! VEGAS delivers with a totally blown-out hardcore freakout. Sounds kind of like some kind of psychedelic beatdown. If you feel like punching the mirror, check this out instead. (BA)
(Judas Chair Collective)

LOS MOGULOS – "I / Taistelija (Aivoproteesi)"

Finnish punks LOS MOGULOS throw out two substantial songs on this piece of vinyl. Side A is more on the poppy end, but in that way that Oi! can be poppy. Direct and fierce with ham-handed palm muting and simple leads. The vocals are shouted in Finnish (with an English translation), yet still melodic. Side B is on the dark end of mid-tempo, minor chord punk in a way that reminds me of THE WAR GOES ON. No real hooks to it…just a bleak snapshot of the atrocities of war. Decent two-song banger, but side A is gonna get more plays from me. (GH)
(Roku)

LUNGLUST – "War at Home"

Truly massive, grinding crust. These Bostonians are WAR COLLAPSE-grim, doom metal heavy, and can kick out the D-beat like an avalanche. They've also got brutal blasts and blackened undertones that will push you over the edge. Like a big dark cloud raining rusty nails onto the dead earth. (BA)
(Dead Tank / War Fever)

KADOTETTU TULEVAISUUS – "Vapaa Tahto" EP

Third EP from this long-running Finnish hardcore troupe, featuring four new tracks and two tracks recorded in the early '90s. The contemporary tracks are completely forgettable, sounding like life-long punks just going through the motions, though the last track ("Epävirallinen") completely breaks that mold, standing head and shoulders over the rest as a blazing example of speedy, venomous traditional Finnish hardcore. The two old tracks, "Discharge" ('92) and "Sä Et Oo Paras" ('91) are both pretty fucking great! "Discharge" sounds exactly like you'd think, with a very DISCHARGE-y riff and a ton of aggression, while "Sä Et Oo Paras" is a vicious short sharp shock of VARAUS-style rage. Finnish hardcore fanatics should snatch this up for that track alone, and be happy that there are two others that are also worth their timel. (AU)
(self-released)

MEA CULPA – "The Simple Art Of Murder" LP

This New Orleans band plays upbeat, quirky Americana-tinged punk rock. Dare I say cowpunk? It's not as corny as that reference might suggest. Several songs remind me of FIREHOSE (but not the jazzy, funky stuff) or maybe X, the BLASTERS, or the GUN CLUB. It definitely feels like it's played by slightly older people who know what they're doing. Great stuff in a style that you don't hear so much these days, at least done this well. (AM)
(Summary Execution)

MEDICTATION – "Warm Places" LP

MEDICTATION consisted of members of LEATHERFACE and the SAINTE CATHERINES and it shows. This is, for the most part, anthemic, mid to up-tempo, melodic pop punk with gruff vocals. The late Dickie Hammond's guitar playing (H.D.Q., LEATHERFACE) dominates the record, which isn't a bad thing but you pretty much know what you're getting. With that being said, the best parts of the record are the quieter, more introspective songs. Sure, they are less punk and more rock but they are very catchy and at some point you have to get tired of the same old pop punk. Right? (PA)
(Dead Broke)

MENTAL DISTRESS – "Traditions" EP

Primarily blasty fast hardcore in an early / mid '00s 625 type vein, with some powerviolence groove and youth crew chugging thrown in at times. Passionate vocals back up the lyrics about righteous theft, interpersonal boundaries, the harm caused by period blood shaming, and so forth. The recording is solid, albeit a little bit clean for my tastes. I'm into this band! (DG)
(Bonobo Stomp / CanISay? / Crapoulet / Dead Punx / Dirty Guys Rock / Emergence / Itawak / No Way Asso / Paillettes Editions / Skatepizza)

MIAMI / SHOTWELL – split LP

What the fuck?! I feel like I was just handed a valuable piece of San Francisco DIY punk history. I'll start with MIAMI. Unfortunately I never got to witness this band live, but the stories in the amazing accompanying zine made it seem like I truly missed out. The songs sound like pure nihilistic pop punk with crooked melodies and throaty vocals, the way this shit is supposed to sound. SHOTWELL's side is also great, packed with non-stop chaotic melodies and vocals that define the sound of Mission District bands. The zine captures the spirit of the time, or at least what I imagine it to have been like, with stories of setting up generator shows and getting shut down by the pigs, flyers, and pictures. I'm sure this release would make many *MRR* readers feel nostalgic. I know it makes me wish I was born earlier and able to witness the way it was. (DB)
(Dead Broke)

MØRKT KAPITTEL – "Unsnuelig Ferd" LP

Oh shit! Get ready for some true Norwegian black…D-beat? "Why so surprised?" you may ask. "Surely you've heard blackened crust before." Sure…but these guys take it to a level few can reach. They got the creepy mournful song structures of their church torching, countrymates, but with that solid, galloping beat and the hardcore urgency. Add some banshee in the pits of hell vocals, and I'm in heaven. Break out your malt liquor scented candles, because this one's a real blackened gem. (BA)
(D Beat Hjerte / Drittprofitt / 5 Feet Under / Lukkft Avdeling / The Mind is Everything / Punkebjartes Punkeplater / Snack Ohm Tapes)

MOTORSAV – 12"

MOTORSAV is a newer K-town punk band with some similarities (musically) to MASSHYSTERI and GORILLA ANGREB, but delving more into synth and hardcore than those bands ever ventured. In their more hardcore moments, they sound like a sophisticated HUL and their last song on the record, "Intet Hab," sounds like it could be a NO HOPE FOR THE KIDS demo. A solid record and a wonderful addition to the long lineage of essential Copenhagen punk. I'm stoked to see what these punks have in store for the future. (GH)
(Elektriske Plader / Rusted Teeth)

MYAKKA – "Blast" lathe EP

The notoriously no-fi lathe format suits this outfit perfectly, giving their loose churning sounds a howling HELLHAMMER feel. No low end to speak of, but maximum energy filthy metal / crust transcends fidelity sometimes, and all this clear plexi square does is make me want more. Hearing "Hate/Fear" nearly fall apart when the blasts take over pretty much personifies what I want in a DIY punk record.
(self-released)

NEON – "Neon / Nazi Schatzi"

I first heard of this because someone said that a Berlin record store had done a extremely limited pressing, and after hearing the recordings I immediately felt crazy. This features Astrid who was later in LILIPUT and if you are a fan of that sound you will see why my mind was lost… Dudes reissuing women's work only for other collector dudes! Secret histories of genius punk women revealed only for collector scum types?! Never fear, that same store later teamed up with Water Wing records to make this available for the plebian masses, and what a necessary reissue this is! A short lived band, a forgotten tape found in someone's archive years and years later, *and* a member of LILIPUT; how could you go wrong! These songs are vital blasts of pleasurable antagonism, snotty and rowdy with shades of the hysterical / delightful Dada-isms of KLEENEX but more straightforward punk in a way. The way "*Neon neon neon neon*" is repeated into infinity is a rollercoaster ride you will want to get in on! (LG)
(Static Age / Water Wing)

NOTS – "Live at Goner" LP

The surreal insurrection sound of NOTS, an Actionist soundscape that demonstrates the shift from their rambunctious early days of URINALS / KLEENEX style playful snot to a stark tense Ballardian brutality. The synth sounds incandescent and otherworldly, oddly creepy; most places I have seen NOTS play have somehow had sound people that have kept the synth out of the hearing range of those present, so actually getting to hear Alexandra's disorienting shapes is worth the price of admission! I held off on ordering this because a live disc is not always something even the obsessive collector of a group's discography needs, but listening to this proves that to be a bogus assumption on my part. This is incendiary work and demonstrates the power of NOTS' art destruction force in full. I don't understand why there aren't fifty NOTS acolyte bands in every town. (LG)
(Goner)

OND TRO – "Det Røde I Det Hvide I Dine Øjne" EP

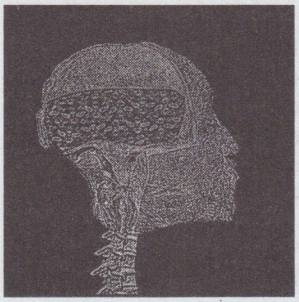
Copenhagen punks, OND TRO, take a deathrock / post-punk guitar tone and set it adrift in their sea of abrasive hardcore on this debut vinyl release. There are some flashes of RUDIMENTARY PENI's *Death Church* in those minor chords, but overall, OND TRO has a modern punk feel and energy. The vocals are painfully screamed and manipulated with a sense of ferocious urgency, but retain hints of melody, which makes this band catchy. They definitely have a sense of the history of K-town hardcore, but put their own spin on it. Excellent. (GH)
(Spaghetti Cassetti)

ONE BEGGAR SUN – LP

Nashville rock outfit ONE BEGGAR SUN seems to span several genres, from an almost VIBRATORS-esque '70s poppy punk to '90s indie MODEST MOUSE stylings, but the tough Joan Jett rocker vocals are the true savior here. (CR)
(self-released)

OXIDANT – "Deconstruct" EP

There are eleven (!) crushing powerviolence songs (and one stomper of an intro) on this single, the first release from Raleigh, North Carolina's OXIDANT. Each one of these (including the HÜSKER DÜ cover on



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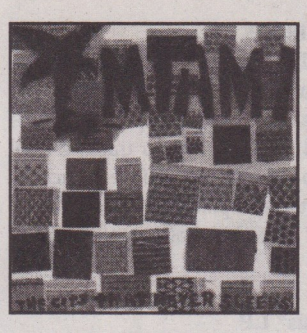

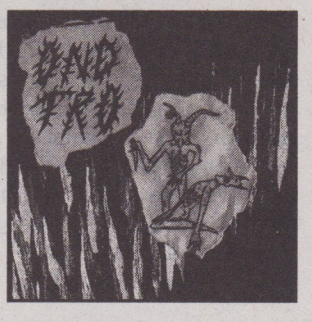

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the B-side) is chock full of ludicrously fast riffs interspersed with riffs that are atypical for the genre. Even with those moments, this still isn't the freshest or most original powerviolence release. It is a damn fun one though, and I would still go see this band play live. Fans of NO COMMENT will find something to love here. See ya in the pit. (JD)
(To Live A Lie)

PANDEMIX – "Scale Models of Atrocities" CD

The couple of listens this took to warm up were fully worth it. PANDEMIX play alienated melodic punk, and a distant musical and lyrical comparison might be a more articulate yet defeated-sounding SIGNAL LOST. Overall this is a relatively straightforward yet bleak mid-paced sound with definite anarcho-punk influence, with melodies that match the well-written lyrics. The words largely deal with the crux of personal and political alienation, with a regular emphasis on naming the ideological tricks we play on ourselves. This is also available on vinyl, where you can pore over the lyrics and excellent artwork more easily. (DG)
(Boss Tuneage)

PANIC ATTACK! – "Holding On" 10"

Meaty and gruff biker punk along the lines of COCKNOOSE, but with more of an ear towards US hardcore. They set the tone out of the gate with the lyrically dark hard-hitting burner "Tweeker," and the next three tracks continue on the same trajectory. Plenty of swing (even some surprisingly welcome handclaps in "Spotburner") but still the whole record sounds pissed—and the guitars are shitfire hot throughout.
(Cold Turkey)

PATSY'S RATS – "Rounding Up / Little Rat Doll"

This single has two saccharine power pop songs with a slight rock'n'roll edge to them. These two songs very slightly (and I'm happy it's only slightly) skirt the edge of the so-called "surf rock" revival brought on by folks like BEST COAST, but in my mind this has more in common with groups like the EXPLODING HEARTS. I prefer Patsy's voice over Christian's (AKA Billy Jeans from MEAN JEANS), so the A-side, where she is the sole vocalist, is the winner here. Indie movie directors: this is ideal music for the part of your trailer where people are driving in sunny weather. (JD)
(Dirtnap)

PIÑÉN – "Vida" EP

More fire from this Barcelona duo. Relentless pogoing is the foundation for engine-revving riffs and a persistent angry vocal—sounds pretty basic right? Well it is, and it rips hard and the packaging and layout are top notch too. 'Nuff said. Rage on. (MA)
(Hurricane)

PINK MUSCLES – "The Signal" CD

I don't even know what the fuck you call this. Like some failed genetic splicing of the LOCUST with Hydra Head vomit and a bar punk band that wears goofy costumes onstage, but are preemptively dicks to you if you try and strike up a conversation later. I lost too much of my hearing sitting through this kinda shit in high school, and in fact, I correctly guessed that this band is from Seattle. (DG)
(self-released)

POISON IDEA – "Darby Crash Rides Again: The Early Years, Volume 1" LP

How much do you really need me to tell you about this one? Darby Crash has been riding again and again and again and there's so many versions of this release, so let me just tell you what's on this one: six-song *Boner's Kitchen Demo* from '81, ten-song *Darby Crash Rides Again Demo* from '82 (this reviewer's favorite), and ten songs live from KBOO radio from 1983. Legendary band with so much legendary material. If you don't have it already, here's another chance. (MA)
(American Leather / TKO)

POISON IDEA – "Latest Will and Testament" LP

Despite being a pretty big fan of POISON IDEA, I somehow missed this sort-of reunion LP from the band when it came out. Unfortunately, this record is a slight disappointment. That's not to say that this is *bad* by any means—there isn't a bad POISON IDEA LP—but it feels less dynamic than most of their earlier material. There are still some killer moments and gnarly ass riffs throughout the album, but there are some tedious mid-tempo numbers that seemingly doesn't go anywhere (see "Jihad Love" and "Novelty"). On these songs, and in some other ones, there are times where it sounds like Pig Champion is phoning it in. However, compared to other hardcore acts, *Latest Will and Testament* blows most other reunion albums out of the water. Despite the occasional weak moments, this is still a damn fine last album for Pig Champion, one of punk's all-time greatest guitarists. This reissue was remixed by Joel Grind (of TOXIC HOLOCAUST), but if you already have an LP copy, there isn't enough of a difference in the mixes to replace your original. Apparently this remix does sound better than the CD version, but I don't have a CD copy to use as a comparison. (JD)
(American Leather / TKO)

POISON IDEA – "War All The Time" LP

POISON IDEA of course need no introduction. I've always felt like *War All The Time* is a little underrated as far as their mid '80s output goes, especially compared to *Kings Of Punk* or *Record Collectors Are Pretentious Assholes*. While those two are undeniable classics, I feel this LP is POISON IDEA at their tightest, pissed, and most focused, at least until they unleashed that one monstrosity three years later, and a decent reissue of this LP is long overdue. The vinyl itself sounds great, and not noticeably different from the original when I played the two back to back. They did redo the printed sleeve with a different photo collage and slightly tweaked the lyrics side layout, making it white-on-black instead of the opposite. While I prefer absolute minimal changes to original layouts, the new picture sleeve certainly doesn't look bad, and is at least aesthetically in line with the original. Getting rid of the B-side label art was stupid, though. (DG)
(American Leather / TKO)

THE PUTZ – "Clinically Inane" LP

I usually yawn at the "but the music is good, so you don't have to listen to the lyrics!" argument, so this the QUEERS and SCREECHING WEASEL worship produced by Joe Queer exhausts me. It will be a real treat for the "punk rock is about being crude and acting like we're teen delinquents even though we're in our 30s" crowd. You know the type. Everyone else will find it annoying. You will never get your two minutes back after listening to their "hipsters should shave more" rant song, "Time to Shave." (RH)
(Eccentric Pop)

RAUKOUS – "Apparitions" CD

This one is some dark, SoCal hardcore with lyrics that focus on the occult. That sounds like something I would hate, but this band is actually pretty fucking sick! Their sound is firmly rooted in classic L.A hardcore, with RUDIMENTARY PENI and death rock influence, and pissed off, shouted vocals. It's like…it looks goth, but it sounds hardcore. Then there's a ska song, and I'm like "What the fuck is this and why is it still sick?" Whatever…I'm down! (BA)
(Nothing But a Nightmare)

RAXOLA – "Guts Out" CD

RAXOLA were, along with the KIDS and HUBBLE BUBBLE, part of the trifecta of original Belgian punk bands that actually produced full-lengths (way) back in the day. In the case of RAXOLA, they flamed and died fairly quickly, partly self-immolated by becoming a little too prog-rock for the likes of some! Forty years later, the main man (having reformed the band at the instigation of the Japanese—who else—in the new millennium) is still at it, and has produced a new full-length to boot. It retains the biting political class politics as ever. Musically, it shines when it sticks to brilliant power pop. Some of the more rock'n'roll (and just straight rock) at a more pedestrian pace isn't so hot. And the hip-hop contributions are likewise hit and miss. But you've got to admire the the power, passion, conviction (and mean lead guitar) all round, and the cover of BILLY BRAGG's "Between The Wars" is stripped down, and suitably stunning. Describing themselves as the punk soul of rock'n'roll doesn't sound so bad, really… (RK)
(self-released)

RED GLOVES – "Night Gap" LP

The first track sounds dead on like JIMMY EAT WORLD. It's a melodic, pop punk / indie, radio-friendly tune with pretty vocals that failed at sounding anthemic. While it never strays too far from that first song, the record does get a little darker, a little heavier, a bit more screamy and a little less pop. There are elements of bands like JAWBREAKER and HOT WATER MUSIC, or at least there are elements of bands that were trying to sound like the aforementioned bands. While not at all poorly written, the songs just don't manage to stand out as great. Add that to a slick recording that sounds like it should be big but just can't manage to do it and you get just another record. (PA)
(Dangerhouse Skylab / Dingleberry / Emergence / GPS Prod / Impure Muzik / Shot Down / Some Produkt / Vouhvoue)

RVINES / VALESKJA VALCAV – split EP

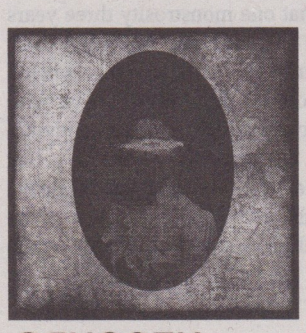
RVINES deliver manic and scattered metal / grind with discordant guitars and drums that seem constantly just a hair behind the beat, giving even the blasts a lethargic and anxious feel. On the flip VALESKJA VALCAV drop a sublime and subdued minimal techno track, a cool down that lurches into syruped hip-hop for a breath before launching into HiNRG chaotic industrial / house...it has no place in the mag but it's on the flipside of a grindcore record so I get to lay praise upon it. (WN)
(Emergence)

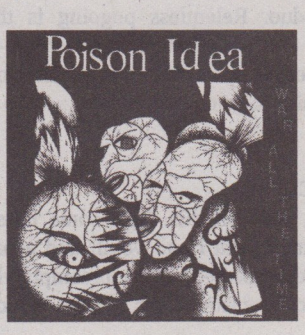
SACRIFICIO – "Pulidores De Tumbas" LP

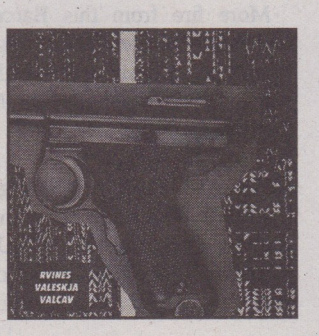
Fuck, this is your Mexican LP of the year folks. Wild and free, unrestrained by genre or trend, SACRIFICIO blend blastbeats, melodic vocal parts, vicious mosh breakdowns, and catchy riffs into an irresistible stew of brain-melting hardcore unlike anything I've heard since…well, forever. The TERCER MUNDO LP is a reasonable comparison, but where TERCER MUNDO were dark and austere SACRIFICIO are energetic and at least vaguely upbeat. There are very few bands that can somehow combine the vibes of CAPITALIST CASUALTIES and SOLUCION MORAL like SACRIFICIO do on "Estar Pedono Basta" and completely fucking own it. Very, very few bands. The beautiful recording does the band all the justice in the world, capturing a clean and fully realized live quality sound with the nasty bass tone just as up front as the shouted vocals and rusty barbed wire riffing, all intercut with short samples that recall the powerviolence records of the '90s. Not only are there no weak tracks on the record, there isn't even a moment for the listener to catch their breath. I can't imagine how this band survives playing live—it's all aggression and speed and just fucking go all the fucking time. Imagine the spiritual jolt you felt the first time you heard the *Dirty Rotten* EP and add to it the feeling of discovering ATOXXXICO's *Punks De Mierda* EP. Combine that with that brilliant, original graphic design and a band photo that has the group posing on horseback (so fucking rad) and you've got the essence of this LP. Goddamn, I'm feeling it and you will be too. (AU)
(SPHC)

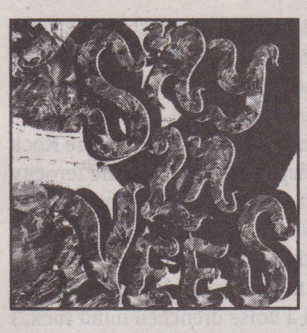
SAY LA VEES – "Crimson Rose" EP

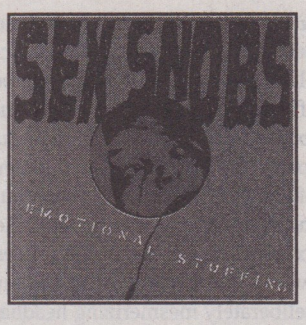
Wow, this is a flashback 45! Members of GIRLS AT DAWN in a new dreamy group that brings to mind the heady days of the '00s when there were a million psyche / C86 / Bomp! girl groupers surfing this soundwave. As a fan of *Girls in the Garage* and the FAT TULIPS this trend pleased me greatly despite the fact that not all the bands had true magical hit writing abilities and the snotty misogyny the groups had to endure was pretty wretched and awful…Well, back to 2017, and SAY LA VEES grab our hearts with surf-y guitars and dreamy / desolate vocals. On "Too Far Gone" in particular (the best song on the record) they have a sorta SHADOW MORTON meets LA LUZ feeling. The A-side is really dreamy—"Crimson Rose" is straight up sugar pop, then "Morning Glow" is like the TERMITES song on the aforementioned garage girls compilation in the best way! You will already know if this sorta thing grabs you. I personally can't wait to hear more. (LG)
(Ugly Pop)

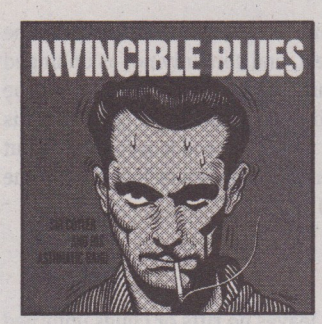


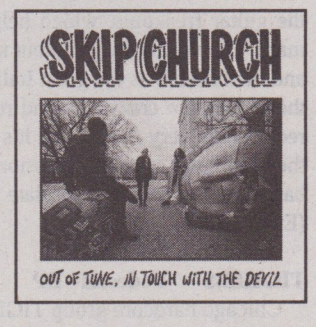












SEX SNOBS – "Emotional Stuffing" LP

While the guitar work is deeply rooted in DINOSAUR JR soup, the vocals and lyrics are so uninspired that they totally kill any vibe or rockin' notion I might have had. A few killer intros and noodles here and there, but no thank you. Their free hosting site for this album boasts Albini engineering credits. I am tortured by my disbelief. (DZ)
(High Dive)

SHARK INFERNO – "The Black And White Album" CD

From Detroit but now residing in Rotterdam, this two-piece seems to like the CRAMPS as well as liking grunge. I didn't feel the groove they are going for. Lo-fi that doesn't stand out at all. Who knows, maybe Thurston will like it. (RL)
(self-released)

SIKES / TRASH BAG – split CD

TRASH BAG is weird, noisy, and total chaos, which is all fine and good. SIKES however is utterly unlistenable sassy white boy noise-rap-rock that made me laugh / choke / spew coffee out my nose. Painful and ugly—and not in a good way. (CR)
(Get Hip)

SIR COYLER AND HIS ASTHMATIC BAND – "Invincible Blues" EP

Pretty tasty treat from this Seattle group. "Invincible Blues" almost veers off the rails with a driving riff à la MOTÖRHEAD, in that super anthemic adult punk style like MUDHONEY or the HIVES. The flip is more mid-tempo catchy stuff in the same manner. Let's just say I prefer the former. (GB)
(Pig Baby)

SKIP CHURCH – "Out Of Tune, In Touch With The Devil" LP

My first impression was REIGNING SOUND worship, and I may not be far off, but this is just a great party rock record. There's no lyric sheet, and the snot / sneer levels are pretty high in the mix, so I don't know exactly what they're whining about, but this spastic shit rules pretty hard. Not as weird or powerful as the COWBOYS, but some sweet party Goner rock I can hear a few more times before I go to goddamn bed. I think you'll like this. (DZ)
(Randy)

SNIVELLING SHITS – "I Can't Come" LP

Funny, I was just thumbing my '90s copy of this UKDIY classic last month. As I recall, when Damaged Goods first put this out, they aptly pressed it on shit colored brown wax. Seems maybe they lost their sense of humor this time around, since it's on white wax. SNIVELLING SHITS existed in the late '70s / early '80s with a lone single pressed in France. Apparently they thought they were better than that though, since they recorded a ton of shit, and here are the bowels to show for it. It's pretty much the best kind of music to listen to, especially if you can deal with the VELVETS and shit. (GB)
(Damaged Goods)

SOFT SHOULDER – "Songs and Intermissions" LP

SOFT SHOULDER put out two LPs this month. It seems like maybe they could have edited it down to one and made something cooler and more engaging. This definitely had great moments but the interesting parts are overwhelmed by the feeling of having someone's hard drive / every practice tape they've ever made dumped on you. Looking at the title of this, maybe that was the intention? There are a million songs and ideas on here, lots of no wave skree, some wild punk insanity, lots of long drawn out "intermission" parts…Maybe I am too much of a Grandma to handle the non-songs?! I don't know, I like noise music, but this sounds like a band setting up in a video arcade, followed by a really good song, then more sounds of a band setting up. When you are capable of writing songs like "C-USA," which sounds like a HUGGY BEAR Gravity Records out take in a deeply pleasurable manner, why blow the rest of your vinyl allowance on noodling indulgences? The artwork looks like a '90s emo / pop punk record somehow, and I wish that they had put an insert in that wasn't just "flyers of the cool bands we have played with." I don't get the thing of not wanting to have your lyrics or ideas displayed in writing, or even who played on the record, reading the inserts is one of the things that got me excited as a kid looking at records on Kill Rock Stars or Gravity or Dischord! Despite my complaining, this is ultimately a cool record and if you are into the skronkier side of noise you will enjoy / embrace, so seek it out. (LG)
(Gilgongo)

SURF RABBITS – LP

Crazy name, crazy guys. The SURF RABBITS are from Perth, Australia, and play a meaty, raw, and loud strain of sun-baked punk rock. They remind me a little of the NEW BOMB TURKS or the MONOMEN, in that they are garage-y and blown-out but definitely on the punk side. Vocally there's a sort of Aussie take on BILLY CHILDISH's angry snarl. If you miss that Estrus sound, you could do worse. (AM)
(Crane Town)

TANZLER – "Recluse" CD

Southern California's TANZLER offer up some good lyrics at times, scratching the surface of the perils of social media, failing mental health, war, homelessness, and social isolation. The music itself is thrash that dips a couple of toes in crossover (mostly in the guitar solos). On the first couple of songs, the vocals sound a little bored, but he seems to ease into anger later on. The vocals have a bratty quality that reminds me of early MUNICIPAL WASTE. Ten demo songs are tacked onto the end that don't add much to the overall effect. They sound fairly similar to the rest of the thirteen song album. (GH)
(Nothing But A Nightmare)

TESTA DURA — "Lotta Continua" EP

I fear this record is a victim of its own hype. Coming into it, I was assured that it was a brilliant classic-era Italian hardcore revival and frankly, I don't really see it. The A-side is sluggish and kinda monotone, much too one-note and midtempo to step to the masters. The B-side picks up the pace a little bit, both in terms of the tempo and

the guitar freakouts, which helps immensely but still doesn't hit the mark. The vocals are good but not great, and certainly not as unhinged and memorable as the great Italian hardcore vocalists. I dunno, maybe these guys are crazy live and really live up to the hype there but this record falls very flat, in that it's clear what the band is trying to do but they just can't match the passion, intensity, or songwriting chops of the bands they're trying to emulate. (AU)
(Even Worse)

TIGRESS – "Pedestal" EP

Chicago hardcore group TIGRESS leaves no riffs or chugs unturned with this small but mighty 7". Metallic mid-tempo froth builds just to smash it down into pit-thrash chug and sludge that can only be shattered into chaos again. Both sides are pure unadulterated chaos where songs literally bleed into one another. The beatdown of shouted vocals is brutal. Tough stuff. (CR)
(Not Normal)

TIMESHARES – "Bearable" LP

Emotional indie / pop punk in the vein of bands like LATTERMAN and IRON CHIC. Mostly mid-tempo beats and super melodic and melancholy guitars. The two singers switch off from almost emo-type vocals to yells. This album was released seven years ago by Kiss of Death and reissued by Dead Broke last year. Listen f you're in the mood for something poppy and polished done in a good way. (DB)
(Dead Broke)

TUNNIT – "Vaarallista" EP

Dark synth-punk from Helsinki. It took me awhile to track down any info about this band, as the cover is very minimal with no lyrics, pictures, or much info. Mysterious. I wasn't sure what to make of the first side with its violin-synth-layered, drum-machine-driven post-punk. The vocals came across as a little too sing-songy and the vibe was overall a little cheesy. However, once I flipped this to the B side, I quickly changed my tune. "Silmätön" is a driving, haunting banger of song that brings to mind SIEKIERA, FLIEHENDE STÜRME, and KILLING JOKE. Fans of JUANITA Y LOS FEOS and POST REGIMENT may also go for this. This band would have fit in perfectly at the debut of Near Dark Festival in Oakland earlier this month. (JC)
(Hetken Laulu)

THE TWO TENS – "On Repeat" CD

The TWO TENS are a rock duo à la WHITE STRIPES, with more of a rock'n'roll RAMONES take and nods to the HIVES and CRAMPS. Thick, gritty rock'n'roll. (CR)
(Man Della)

USA / MEXICO – "Laredo" LP

Whoa. A creation that is more than the sum of its already impressive parts, Austin's USA / MEXICO have dropped a colossal sludge masterpiece in your laps...and you may never want to stand again. With a "members of" list that includes BUTTHOLE SURFERS and SHIT & SHINE, it's safe to say that the weird flag is flying high but this trio never uses the freek factor as a crutch, instead relying on a mid-paced bludgeoning to wear you down before adding electronics and bizarrely affected vocals *(...and guitars, and basses, and drums...these guys seem to be able to fuck with anything successfully)*. Maybe this is Noise Rock for the New Millennium, injecting (perhaps accidentally?) the ferocity of modern day noise / chaos punk into the dirges that dominated so much of the pre-grunge explosion alt / indie days, and kicking both extremes in the ass in the process. Nothing you will hear this month swings like the title track, and much of the record oscillates between a deliberately mesmerizing headbang and a noise drenched mind fuck. I figured this would probably be pretty good but I am floored. (WN)
(12XU)

VAAVI – "Viimeinen Elävä Köyhä" LP

A word of advice: If you were in a punk band in the '70s or '80s and put out some decent records, do not decide to "get the ol' band back together" and release a new album 30 or 40 years later. It rarely works. Start a new band. Let the past go. Salo, Finland's VAAVI released two albums in 1980 and have now released their third LP in 2017. As a new-wavey, alternative rock record, this works for them. It's definitely catchy, uses some pro-production values and is well-played, but it lacks teeth. Radio rock. (GH)
(Kämäset Levyt)

VOIGHT-KAMPFF – "The Din of Dying Youth" 12"

Cold wave has ebbed in popularity over the last year it seems, but several acts faithfully soldier on from its explosion in popularity in the early 2010s. VOIGHT-KAMPFF's new 12" is an excellent example of the style. Combining the rock'n'roll touches of TERRIBLE FEELINGS or Bay Area natives CRIMSON SCARLET with a close study of JOY DIVISION circa *Unknown Pleasures*, this is a well varied and entertaining 12". The only cold wave staple you won't find is a synth-driven soundscape, but all other bases are well covered,without sounding scattered. A good record to add to your collection, or to start in on the style fresh. (LP)
(Deranged)

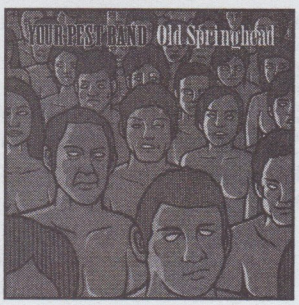
WAILIN' STORMS – "Sick City" CD

Dark post-punk from North Carolina. Y'all might know that I'm the last guy in line for the post-punk train, wondering if I should hop the gate and ride, or just go home and eat something with a lot of gravy on it. This shit is OK, though. This might have been my shit as I was blaring BAUHAUS in 1987. Maybe a few too many Danzig caterwauls and TOOL-ish downtuning, but there are a few killer tracks. Reminds me of that badass NORTHERN LIBERTIES LP from last year, but, you know, not as badass or weird. (DZ)
(Antena Krzyku)

WAR//PLAGUE / WARWOUND – "Forlorn" split EP

Ugly thrashing crust from Minneapolis and the UK, WAR// PLAGUE, have been making gruesome punk rock for some years. Now

RECORDS



this side from the neo-crust disbastards sounds even more mature and devastating, especially hopeless and woefully metallic. Reminds me of later WORLD BURNS TO DEATH. D-beat legends, WARWOUND, whose members went on to play in VARUKERS and form SACRILEGE, deliver aggressive heavy versions from their repertoire of class war punk tracks. I feel like both bands should have covered each other, the sides are so complementary. Regardless, seven tracks round out a brutally stoic and stench-ridden release. (JR)
(Dr. Strange)

WEICHE – LP

Down-tuned and dismal, this LP from Germany features sparse vocals that fill in the spaces between strange proto-core and traditional hardcore riffs. There's something mathematical about how this changes pace and direction frequently drawing in and out of comfortable and uncomfortable spaces. Blastbeats, asy grooves, and dense chapters. I'm thinking of MORSER, RUDIMENTARY PENI, SOILENT GREEN, BOLT THROWER. WEICHE are doing their own thing. (JR)
(Dingleberry / Ecocentric / Kink / WOOAAARGH)

WOODSON – "Fieldhouse" CD

Some '90s emo from this French band. Although this does have that SAMIAM guitar crunch at times, I'm mostly hearing the jangle sounds of PROMISE RING and the GET UP KIDS. Featuring vocals in English, this six-song release is ok. I'm not blown away but they do pull off the sound they are aiming for. A decent emo pop band. (RL)
(Red Plane)

WOTZIT – "Fish" EP

Jerky, quirky Japanese punk that will surely draw comparisons to MINUTEMEN and VICTIMS FAMILY, but with a wildly charismatic and theatrical sounding vocalist. Drop this band on a 1976 NYC art / freek / punk bill and no one will be the wiser. I confess that the vocals took some work for my ears (especially on the title track), but by the time the record closed with "Mister P" I was fully on board. Time to get out of your comfort zone. (WN)
(Killer Bot)

YC-CY – ""Todestanz" LP

Noise rock is a term that gets thrown around a lot, and probably with a loose definition. To me it means vaguely blues-y sludge with rude or unseemly lyrics. YC-CY are a noisey rock band, but I wouldn't say that they are a noise rock band. Their sound lies comfortably between American oddball hardcore bands like DIET COKEHEADS or NEON BLUD, and oddball Polish hardcore like EWA BRAUN or EL BANDA. There's a good amount of sludge, and a thick layer of distortion not unlike the first SWANS LP, or anything by the aforementioned American bands. There's also a nice formal structure, a certain tightness through the entire record that gives it a nice through line, and an impassioned touch that recalls aspects of Polish hardcore. This is the second LP from this Swiss band, and I'm hopeful that there'll be more coming. (LP)
(X-Mist)

YOUNG CONSERVATIVES – "Non-Exist" 12"

Five songs of urgent hardcore from folks that are neither young nor conservative. Most of it is fast, driving, straight hardcore that sounds like a mix of ARTICLES OF FAITH and SWIZ but the best song might be the mid-tempo title track that has just a little bit of BLACK FLAG in it. The recording itself is big and loud, capturing what you would hope they sound like live. Unfortunate name but solid record. (PA)
(Total Recall)

YOUR PEST BAND – "Old Springhead" 2xLP

This is YOUR PEST BAND's best release to date. Super hook-laden, early rock worship, and mega dreaminess on this one: *Sleepwalking*-esque twang on the guitar and perfectly reverbed vocals lead you on before they jump into a handful of super ragers. Killer doomy lyrics which are honestly only made better by the vocalist's loose grasp on the English language. Each track flawlessly slips and slithers from dreamy dream works to garage to power pop to angsty ass punk without sounding desperate. Maybe it was brilliant, but I couldn't handle the sixteen-minute long opus near the end. It was a small price to pay for such a fuckin' banger of a record, though. Get this! (DZ)
(Brassneck / Dead Broke / Snuffy Smiles)

V/A – "Closer to the Grave: 15 Years of Tor Johnson Records" LP

This starts out sounding like a pretty eclectic record with the thrashy hardcore of SAINT JUDE flowing into the twinkly STILL LIFE-style emo of TYLER DANIEL BEAN. Most of the record then tends to follow in the footsteps of one of those bands. BLOODPHEASANT comes up next with what sounds like a cool fuzzed-out hardcore version of a RAINER MARIA song. DEATH TO TYRANTS have a mathy instrumental emo hardcore tune and FURNACE finishes up side A with more thrashy hardcore that somehow manages to be pretty melodic. SEA OF STORMS kicks off side B with a drawn out indie / emo tune that goes into more heavy thrash from LUNGLUST. LATE BLOOMER end up being kind of poppy but brooding at the same time. ANEURYSM come the closest to straight punk and RATSTAB end the record with a weird mix of street punk and hardcore. On the whole, there isn't necessarily anything that sticks out as being a real gem but there also isn't anything to skip over. (PA)
(Tor Johnson)

CONTACTS

A Monsters Tears: monsterpunk.com
American Leather: americanleatherrecords.bigcartel.com
Antena Krzyku: antenakrzyku.pl
Ascenseur Emotionnel: ascenseuremotionnelrecordz.bandcamp.com
Beach Impediment: beachimpedimentrecords.blogspot.com
Black Death: blackdeathrecords.com
Bonobo Stomp: bonobostomp.blogspot.com
Boss Tuneage: bosstuneage.bigcartel.com
Brassneck: brassneckrecords.bigcartel.com
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Even Worse: members.upc.nl
Everything Sucks: everythingsucksmusic.limitedrun.com
Fashionable Idiots: fashionableidiots.blogspot.com
Fasteroctane: www.strthefockewolves.com
5 Feet Under: 5feetunderrecords.bandcamp.com
540: chaosintejas.bigcartel.com
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Negative Jazz: negativejazz.bigcartel.com
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Not Normal: notnormaltapes.bandcamp.com
Not Enough: notenough.se
Nothing But A Nightmare: nothingbutanightmare.com
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PHR: phr.cz
Pig Baby: pigbabyrecords.com
Piñén: destroytightmusic@gmail.com
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Profane Existence: profaneexistence.com
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Raxola: raxola.net
Red Plane: woodsonrock.bandcamp.com
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Shot Down: micksoune@gmail.com
Sick World: sickworldrecords@hotmail.com
Skatepizza: skatepizza.free.fr
Snack Ohm Tapes: sot.rocks
Some Produkt: someprodukt.fr
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Specialist Subject: Specialistsubjectrecords.co.uk
SPHC: sphc.bigcartel.com
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TNS: tnsrecords.co.uk
To Live A Lie: tolivealie.com
Tor Johnson: torjohnsonrecords.com
Total Recall: youngconservatives.bandcamp.com
Urinal Vinyl: urinalvinyl.com
Viral Age: viralagerecords.blogspot.co.uk
Vouhvoue: no address
War Fever: facebook.com/warfeverrecords
Wir Wollen Wulle: wirwollenrecords.blogspot.com
Wooaaargh: wooaaargh.com
World Gone Mad: worldgonemad.bigcartel.com
X-Mist: x-mist.de
Yo-Yo: Yoyorecords.de

CONTACTS

DEMOS

All cassettes and CD-Rs are reviewed in this section. Send yours to PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146 USA and include your contact information. Submissions without artwork will not be considered.

(DG) Dan Goetz
(GH) Greg Harvester
(HB) Heather Blotto
(JB) Julia Booz
(KS) Kenn Suto
(MA) Matt Badenhop
(MD) Michael DeToffoli

APPARITION – APPARITION is a newer, nutso thrash band from Athens, GA brought to you by people who have been doing this shit right for years. No slow / all go style hardcore / fastcore with plenty of idiotic time-signature changes to keep you guessing. Vocals are screamed to the point where you just wanna mail the singer a glass of water. The energy never lets up as these nine songs blaze by. I honestly can't ask for anything better right now. Perfect demo. (GH) (9-song cassette, lyrics included, apparitionathens.bandcamp.com)

CELEBRITY HANDSHAKE – Creeping, crawling, bombastic garage punk from Portland (Maine, the East Coast version) with a wild, screaming singer who stands somewhere between MOJO NIXON, SCREAMING JAY HAWKINS, and the guy from STEEL WOOL. The music itself is repetitive and goes almost nowhere, but the singer saves the whole thing for me. More than three songs might be a bit much. (GH) (3-song CD-R, lyrics not included, celebrityhandshake.bandcamp.com)

CHRONOPHAGE – Not to be confused with the metal band of the same name, Austin's (TX) CHRONOPHAGE plays minimalistic, lo-fi, laidback indie punk in the vein of a more choppy GUIDED BY VOICES or early OF MONTREAL demos. An insistently muddy recording and clean guitar tone suits the band well. Various singers share the mic and each song keeps getting stuck in my head. (GH) (8-song cassette, lyrics not included, chronophage@protonmail.com, 1503 E 38 ½ Street, Austin, TX 78722)

COMPLEX – *Modern Mutants* – Fast and furious hardcore punk from Philly with all the expected hammering drums and breakdowns. Half the songs are in Spanish, half in English. It's all pretty solid in a meat and potatoes hardcore punk kinda way, and it really delivers a driving tempo from start to stop. The drumming is so relentless you feel yourself getting tired just thinking about playing that hard. This seems like a band that would sound really fun live, where you can mosh the fuck out of that pit and sing along to pretty sick lyrics like *"Why can't I just go on up to outer space and get high with fucking aliens and never see a human face?"* I'm sure we can all identify with that on some level, right? (KS) (8-song cassette, lyrics included, complex.bandcamp.com)

DAYTIME DRUGS – *It Don't Come Easy* – Noisy, almost unrecognizable reimaginings of several BEATLES songs. At times it sounds like they took a drum kit, an organ, and a vocalist, put them in a big burlap sack, and tied it to the back of a slow-moving freight train. There are brief moments where the music is more intelligible and sounds like a fully competent blues cover band, but it repeatedly degrades into interpretive avant-garde noise. The band also pays tribute to BEATLES conspiracy theorists, dedicating the recording to "the memory of Paul McCartney (1942–1966)." (HB) (10-song CD-R, lyrics not included, easternprawn@gmail.com)

DAYTIME DRUGS – *Waitin' for the UFO* – This band contains most of the same members as CELEBRITY HANDSHAKE (see above) and has a similar vibe: over the top vocal style, loose NIGHT KINGS-style garage punk and a hilariously inept (and engaging) keyboard pounding throughout some of the songs. I'm a little unsure why there are two separate bands. (GH) (6-song CD-R, lyrics not included, daytimedrugs.bandcamp.com)

DETROIT 442 – *Dance Dance Dance* – Punk'n'roll played well and produced cleanly, but lacking in originality. The mouth-full-of-mush vocals are a bit hard to for me to get past. (MA) (2-song CD-R, lyrics partially included, detroit442.com)

ENAMEL – *Complete The Lie* – ENAMEL is a solid and raging five-piece straight-up punk band. I wouldn't call it "no frills" but there also isn't anything here you likely haven't heard before—it's just done really well. Fast, grabbing, and gritty with good recording quality all the way through. The vocals sort of lay over the guitars and drums in this way that makes them pop. The lyrics are fascinatingly vague but hard-hitting. I think "Parasitic" was my favorite song, but "No Dice" does have the very memorable line *"sharpen your knife for a stab in the back / sharpen our teeth cuz we bite back."* Pretty darn sick. (KS) (7-song cassette, lyrics included, enamelphl.bandcamp.com)

FRAMTID – *Under the Ashes* – Reissue of FRAMTID's massive first LP and first 7". I certainly don't need to preach about this much. If you're a Japanese hardcore fan or crust fanatic (or even just a casual fan like myself) this is some of the most leveling shit that exists. (MA) (21-song cassette, lyrics not included, Black Konflik, PO Box 28, 27600 Raub, Pahang, MALAYSIA)

FZ-10 – Noisy, gritty ANTI-CIMEX style D-beat with two vocalists singing in Spanish and a lot of digi-delay. Art has a spikey punk skeleton partying in a trash can with an apple core and spilt beer. (JB) (9-song cassette, lyrics included, rocksvbdiscos@gmail.com, fz-10.bandcamp.com)

GARY AND THE GIMMICKS – Two quick songs of claustrophobic style, home recorded, drum machine punk about paranoia and moving to San Francisco. It sounds weirdly sterile and '80s in a pretty cool way…like a one-off recording project on Gulcher. Clean guitars and muffled vocals that are a little buried. Sounds cool. (GH) (2-song CD-R, lyrics not included, garyandthegimmcks.bandcamp.com)

INTREPID HEARTS – Minneapolis's INTREPID HEARTS were so fucking good and then they broke up, but they left behind this album on cassette. They play gutsy, heartfelt, mid-tempo, timeless punk with melody that brings the feeling of the REPLACEMENTS, THIS IS MY FIST and BENT OUTTA SHAPE. Britt's voice has the

perfect amount of rasp and beauty that brings a bit of perfection to everything she touches (RAG RAGE, B ARTHUR, BABE QUEST). This tape is fucking excellent! (GH) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, Let's Pretend Records, PO Box 1663, Bloomington, IN 47402, letspretendrecords.com)

JOLLY FUCKERS – *Three Cents and a Cavity* – This isn't really what I expected, but JOLLY FUCKERS play a cross between post-punk and melodic punk that makes me think of J CHURCH, GIANT HAYSTACKS, and MONSULA. Early PEGBOY-style guitar leads permeate each song throughout this tape as the singers tradeoff between sung and spoken lines. It has a strong '90s feel to it, but is also really engaging. (GH) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, jollyfuckers.bandcamp.com)

JUMPIN' BEANS AND THE MOUSTACHES – *King's Medley b/w Three Beer Blues* – This was recorded in 1999 by "Willie" in Richmond, Maine and released in 2017 for reasons that remain somewhat mysterious. "King's Medley" is a psychobilly-influenced medley of Elvis songs, deranged to a point past psychedelic into just incoherent freakout territory. The other track is equally weird, more repetitive and has some CRAMPS-influenced shrieking. (HB) (2-song CD-R, lyrics not included, easternprawn@gmail.com)

KROMOSOMA X – Gang vocals sung in Spanish in what sounds like a constant party. It's the kind of party where we're all raging about something we love and then quickly switching to something we hate. Some of the riffs are light and surfy, some more plodding, derivative in a GERMS-style repetitive way, and all are rough around the edges. These songs sound like an angrier, tougher, and much more carefree RUNAWAYS. (JB) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, baratijarecords.bandcamp.com)

LEBENDEN TOTEN – *Static* – So you're either already a fan or everyone's told you that you need to become one, or you've seen the t-shirt and it looked really cool and you've been meaning to check 'em out. This Portland noisecore band has been active on and off for over a decade now, and while noisy has never been my go-to style, I'm finding a lot to grab onto here. This cassette is essentially a collection of their most recent releases: the *Static* 12", *Mind Parasites* LP, and *At the Window* 7" flexi. All the familiar elements are still present, but with some added synth bits and sound clips, and while I haven't been following their releases closely, I'm noticing an overall evolution in craft and execution. Glad to see this stuff available in Southeast Asia and definitely go see them live if you have the chance! (MA) (10-song cassette, lyrics included, Black Konflik, PO Box 28, 27600 Raub, Pahang, MALAYSIA)

LION'S SHARE – To avoid confusion this is not the Swedish metal band, but a band from St. John's / Newfoundland / Labrador. The cover of this tape and the font of the song titles on the back made me think it was going to be kinda crusty, and to be fair the first song made me think the phrase "poppy crusty punk" for a moment. That said, I'm going to go out on a limb and say the folks in this band like MOTÖRHEAD a lot (I mean, who doesn't right?) 'cause what I'm hearing here is a good mix of that famous band and a '80s hardcore kind of vibe (but more leaning on the MOTÖRHEAD side of things). And it's really solid. I can see a lot of beer getting drunk and fists being pumped in the air in some dark bar to this band, and those fists would be well deserved. (KS) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, lionssharepunk.bandcamp.com)

GARY LLAMA – *The Beauty of Music* – Tepid, mostly alt rock-inspired one-man band stuff from Richmond, Virginia, half of which is instrumental. Dude creates a nice soundscape here and there but overall I'm not relating to this. (MA) (8-song CD-R. lyrics not included, garyllama.bandcamp.com)

MABS – MABS is a three piece coming out of Oakland that plays a form of melodic punk that pulls in some elements of '90s lo-fi post-punk, pop punk, and a whole lot of just solid, catchy riffs. Lourdes's vocals are pretty darn clear for a demo, with lyrics about depression, relationships, and just the hard stuff of life. Her voice can really touch some amazing places, and has an almost CRANBERRIES-esque feel at moments that sticks in your head. I really like how some of the songs will settle into a strong groove that has you head nodding along and then there will be what could almost be called a breakdown, and suddenly the vocals and the tempo just go another direction. The songwriting is fun and engaging and I found myself putting this tape on loop. A good tape (with great cover art) that primes you to see them live. Check it out. (KS) (8-song cassette, lyrics included, mabsoakland.bandcamp.com)

MR. AIRPLANE MAN – *Bits and Pieces* – A two-piece from Boston, MA that's been playing lo-fi-ish rock'n'roll and blues-influenced jams since the late '90s. They had a number of releases and toured with bands like the YEAH YEAH YEAH'S and the WHITE STRIPES. *Bits and Pieces* is a collection from over many years and it definitely has that hodge podge feel to it. There's an overall radio friendly bluesy rock'n'roll thing to most of the songs that would clearly make this band a popular one in a lot of circles. I found myself wanting to like the whole thing more than I did, but maybe it's just supposed to feel like a sampler pack. In that case, it's a good way to figure out if you care about MR. AIRPLANE MAN, or it's just something to add to your collection if you're a fan. (KS) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, mrairplaneman.bandcamp.com)

NICKY REYNOLDS AND HIS PUSHERS – *Demos* – This is an extensive collection of fourteen pop-heavy, uptempo rays of sunshine. The quick pace of many of the songs and borderline cynical lyrics set it apart from straight-up pop. One could say it sounds a little like a gentler, less gritty version of TELEVISION PERSONALITIES or ONION FLAVORED RINGS. (HB) (14-song cassette, lyrics not included, barfbagproductions.bandcamp.com)

NOPROVE – *Via Senza Ritorno* – Political, well-produced melodic hardcore of the sort that could ostensibly have a fanbase made up of both anti-fascist SICK OF IT ALL or H20 fans as well as kids whose burgeoning understanding of punk is informed primarily by the '90s Epitaph catalog, but are looking for a musical and political step out of that quagmire. The passion is definitely conveyed through the vocals, and I wish I could understand the lyrics. (DG) (11-song CD-R, lyrics included, noprove.bandcamp.com)

NOTHING BAND – *Composure* – Almost indescribable sounds from our boy Max (the BLUES, TRASHIES, PREENING, etc.) here as he overlaps blips, pounding, static, air organ (?) and other noises to bring a low cacophony, weird zone to your bedroom. It sounds like CHADBOURNE, RESIDENTS demos, tape trader wildness and discomfort. Not to be slept on. (GH) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, Reefers Records, 11815 31st Place NE, Seattle, WA 98125)

PEELING – *7 Years Of Blood EP* – This is their second release and it continues their vibe of coast-rock psych punk that would enhance any good OSS espionage film. With this cassette I really noticed the well considered pacing: the A-side has a more sultry smoking gun kind of sound to it with plenty of the same adrenaline that you'd get from catching eyes across the room, and the B-side has that relentless down-strumming wave break that eventually crashes down with a steady amorous guitar undertow. This is a

tape that's really easy to get lost in. Seriously, put it on when you're alone and the room will disappear. (MD) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, peeling.bandcamp.com)

PROTOCOL – *More of the Same to Say* – Echoey, tripped out hardcore punk that creatively combines relentless, driving guitar riffs, weird feedback, lilting syncopated beats, stompy breakdowns, and pure noise interludes. Adding buckets of reverb to what might otherwise sound like repetitive tough-guy yelling waves this demo to its landing strip on the cutting edge of avant-garde hardcore. Also fast as fuck. Lyrics addressing white supremacy and police brutality. Seriously something to check out like, right now. (HB) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, protocolbrownbois.bandcamp.com)

REALITY GROUP – *Demo 2016* – Jangly and eerie guitars with jumpy and noodly parts punctuated with talky, dry, catchy vocals. At points there are multiple higher pitched voices singing; at others just a lower voice with a bubbling delay. Reminds me of ERASE ERRATA in the irregular guitar rhythms, but less rounded out and more experimental with open space. (JB) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, realitygroup.bandcamp.com)

REVOLUTION BUMMER – *I (A) My Country* – Really gutsy anarcho-punk, relentess in the style of OG hardcore, to the point where I can almost clearly hear Keith Morris trying to grab the mic and bark along. They manage to get that same clenched eruption off the ground while slinging sludge like the MELVINS could hurl. It's a thickness that I wasn't expecting to seep in in the way that it did. I could hear a lot of post-hardcore influence, especially at the end of the tape where they take it home with a manic manifesto that gets more and more emotional. We need more bands like this, especially now. (MD) (8-song cassette, lyrics not included, revolutionbummer.bandcamp.com)

RIVERS EDGE – This is the debut tape from Chattanooga's RIVERS EDGE and it's a confident, solid and aggressive effort. They follow in the steps of region rock's past (most of them made those original steps in the first place) while adding their own new roads along the way. It's tuneful and melodic while retaining an edge that puts you on the edge of your seat…or just breaking the chair. The lyrics are dark and scream of the shitty bitterness in this world. Hard to explain, but easy to enjoy. Maybe if I told you their past bands it would be helpful: FUTURE VIRGINS, ZIPPERS TO NOWHERE, RICE HARVESTER, DARK RIDES, JARVIS, BASEMENT BENDERS and many, many more. Is that enough? You should probably just order it, right? (GH) (9-song cassette, lyrics included, lifertapes@gmail.com, lifertapes1.bandcamp.com)

ROTE ZORA – Primal blasts of hardcore punk perfection from Barcelona. The same fury and chaos as experienced from the first CHEETAH CHROME MOTHERFUCKERS EP, but with a focus on feminism (detected even with my less than average Spanish, but also the name reference—just look it up). Sparse cymbal use keeps things tense, and Elsa cries injustices in a hoarse and desperate voice. Hardcore punk in its truest form—not to be missed! (MA) (11-song cassette, lyrics included, rotezora.bandcamp.com)

SCORE – SCORE is a band out of London with a beautiful looking tape (the art was great and they had nicely included lyrics) that gives you a wall of guitar sound with screaming vocals. I had a flash to PISSED JEANS (and the opening of "Honeys" specifically) with a raging punk / hardcore feel to it. The lyrics are solid, the feel is fast and pulsing, and the momentum keeps you going. Sure, a lot of the songs sound very similar, but that doesn't mean that I don't want to listen to the whole thing through and come back for more. (KS) (7-song cassette, lyrics included, scorepunx.bandcamp.com)

THE 65S – *Wolves and Men* – Melodic, gruff vocal pop punk from New Jersey for fans of LEATHERFACE or perhaps other things on No Idea. Nope, not for me. (MA) (5-song CD-R, lyrics not included, pyrrhicvictoryrecordings.com)

SOLARIZED – *Thermo Dynamics of Life* – Philly band doing more of a late '90s / early '00s non-traditional hardcore style. Could be categorized as post-hardcore / noise rock, but it's pretty hard for me to compare to anything in particular. Definitely heavy and rhythmic. The tracks connect and play though like one fluid movement with the help of sound clips and noisescapes. Maybe too dense for the trendies but I appreciate this for its originality and sincerity. (MA) (7-song cassette, lyrics included, solarized.bandcamp.com)

SON OF SAM – *The Essential 44 Caliber Hits* – Mid-'80s recordings from this seemingly long forgotten Detroit hardcore punk band. The recording quality varies and it's hard to tell if there's any intentional order to the sequence. Stylistically it ranges from trashy hardcore to ugly punk. Sometimes the vocals sound chopped and screwed (i.e. abnormally deep, but not guttural). I could see this appealing to '80s USHC completists, as I don't think this material has been released otherwise, but I don't view it as essential compared to its contemporaries. (MA) (20-song CD-R, lyrics not included, detroit442.com)

SPACE IS HAUNTED – *Contact* – This recording is impressively ethereal for being produced by a two-piece using conventional rock instruments. There is an undeniable underlying current of strong, creative songwriting. The songs (and space-travel themed title) invoke the aesthetic of desperation tempered with hopefulness that blossomed so brilliantly in the '90s. It kind of sounds influenced by KATE BUSH, CAT POWER, and the FLAMING LIPS all at once. This shit is dark, passionate, beautifully performed, and just really, really good. (HB) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, spaceishaunted.bandcamp.com)

SPECTRAL//DEATH – *Life at Nuclear Paradise Vol. 1* – Noisy yet technical deluge of total powerviolence mayhem with metal influences. There is barely a breakdown or moment to come up for air, although they do include a pretty indulgent free-form guitar solo. It's pretty hard to hear what's really going on because of the level of sheer noise and chaos captured in this very alive live recording. (HB) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, spectraldeath.bandcamp.com)

STRAIGHT CRIMES – *Jams, With Microphone* – Oakland's STRAIGHT CRIMES have been rumbling around for quite a few years now and continue to evolve while breathing new life into every release. Stark, programmed beats thud under feedback-stricken guitars and solid, inventive bass lines…sometimes it sounds like *Lysol*-era MELVINS, but most of the time they're channeling otherworldly noise and funneling that into semi-coherent song structures. Heavy like a steamroller flattening cars without any of the machismo. (GH) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, graytabbywithdarkstripespleasecall.blogspot.com, straightcrimes.bandcamp.com)

SYNDROMES – Driving and at times melodic crust that mixes guttural vocals with pounding guitar riffs and blasting drums, with some eerie background guitar sounds at times. SYNDROMES is operating well within the bounds of what you'd expect for crust and is doing pretty darn good at laying down some sick tracks (though the lyrics are nothing too wild). It grew on me with each listen and will get your head nodding pretty darn hard. (KS) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, Halo of Flies, 3444 N. Bremen Street, Milwaukee, WI 53212)

DEMOS

DEMOS

TELEVISIÓN SS – *Grabaciones Perdidas 2008–2011* – Nothing at all will ever make me understand why a band would use the SS logo as part of their name. What the actual fuck is wrong with you? Otherwise, this band is great, pretty heavy SCREAMERS / TWISTED ROOTS influence, and they cover "122 Hours of Fear" just to make it clear. Also reminded of GRUPO SUB-1, with synthy freakiness and keyboards dominating with circus beats and high pitched and shouty / screamy vocals. Most of the songs seem to be recorded live. The art includes a Garbage Pail Kid bathing in a urinal, ripped and collaged headlines and flyers. (JB) (12-song cassette, lyrics not included, baratijarecords.bandcamp.com)

**VERRUGA$** – Every song on this tape fades in and then out, as if to keep you in a constant dream state or to project an everlasting momentum. VERRUGA$ are from Lima, and sing in Spanish with poppy power chords and out-of-tune dual vocals that are earnest, brief, and possibly drunk. One or two songs have a hook reminiscent of RAMONES or their rock'n'roller progenitors LEUZEMIA. (JB) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, baratijarecords.bandcamp.com)

VILE BODIES – New Orleans group with a sound that is at times surfy and jangly in a toe tapping rock'n'roll way, and at other times snappy post-punk. The dueling vocals intersect and diverge in a smooth but slightly snotty flow, and though I can't tell what either person is saying, I like the way they're saying it. There's definitely a strong X influence going on, as well as whiffs of DEAD MOON (in the more straight-up rock'n'roll moments) and even one section of the third song that briefly channels LE TIGRE real hard (think "Deceptacon"). It took me a few listens but it really grew on me a lot. Pick it up and put on your dancing shoes. (KS) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, 736 4th Street, New Orleans, LA 70130)

WIRMS – *Make America Squirm Again* – Fayetteville, AR garage punks who make me think of the over the top rock'n'rolly-ness of early MOJO NIXON, OBLIVIANS, and FLAT DUO JETS. Definite swagger and attitude for days on this raw, blown-out recording. They bring in the energy of hardcore to their take on garage, which sounds fucking excellent to my ears. (GH) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, kerchowrecords.bandcamp.com)

XERTZ – Driving WIPERS style layered guitars with vocals that evoke EMBRACE-era Ian MacKaye's slightly yelling, off-tune singing, with dark and chorus-y vibes like CRIMINAL CODE. Catchy and brief. (JB) (3-song cassette, lyrics not included, electricheatrecords.com)

V/A – *Oi the Tape, Vol. 2* – As a non-ironic fan of Oi!, I was genuinely excited when I grabbed this out of the bin. However, the story started to go awry when I inspected the cover, which features a cartoon of a girl with a chelsea masturbating with a cassette. Pretty quick way to turn off a lot of folks honestly, and it only adds to Oi!'s bro-culture image and distracts from the whole venture. After that I was hoping the music would in some way redeem itself, but overall it's very blasé Oi! mixed in with some straight hardcore and punk. On the first side the most notable mentions are FOREIGN LEGION's "She's a Punk," BLIND PIGS's "Steel Toe Judges," and CRUCIAL CHANGE's "Absolution." I had more hope in the second side at first, as DOGS IN FIGHT's "Home to War," FOREIGN LEGION's "Another Bullshit Night," and NO COAST CRIMINALS's rather silly but nice "Punk in Punk Out" started things off okay, but it was murky territory after that. I liked the BLIND PIGS's cover of the REPLACEMENTS song "Goddam Job" but that wasn't enough to save the whole thing. Overall, pretty ho-hum compilation but if you're a rabid fan of all things Oi! and close to Oi!, then you will find something on here you'll like. With thirty-eight songs on two sides, it certainly is an economical purchase. (KS) (38-song cassette, no lyrics, crowdcontrolmedia.limitedrun.com)

V/A – *The Wild Angels* – The label Girlsville put out this ten song little comp and it's a very satisfying, dance friendly grab bag of solid power pop and '60s (think the KINKS or Motown or even some STOOGES) influenced rock. It's the kind of tape that you put on and you don't realize you're really digging it until you notice you've been nodding along for a while. I particularly enjoyed the songs "I'm a Mess" by the PRISSTEENS, "Putty" by PURPLE WIZZARD, and "Sharp Suited Scag" by the TEAMSTERS. I'm definitely keeping it on replay for a while, and it's a good one to pick up if you feel like dancing around a bit or want some sick jams to drive to. I feel cooler just listening to it. (KS) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, girlsville.bandcamp.com)

V/A – *Your Balls Hit My Face* – An esoteric and all over the place compilation of artists from North Carolina. It tends towards the lo-fi repetition of scratchy, sample-heavy, dreamy but vocal driven stuff. It's weird and wacky and gets your attention at times, but nothing on it really stands out to me. If you want to smoke weed and feel really uncomfortable, pick it up. (KS) (17-song cassette, lyrics not included, PO Box 810 Saluda, NC 28773)

ZINES

Send zines for review to PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146 USA. Include postpaid price within the US and internationally. We are always looking for multi-lingual zine reviewers who are based in the US. Write to ari@maximumrocknroll.com for more information.

(AP) Ari Perezdiez
(DG) Dan Goetz
(DZ) Ryan Modee
(EC) E. Conner
(EW) Eli Wald
(JB) Julia Booz
(JD) Joan DeToro
KS) Kenn Suto
(MM) Marissa Magic
(MR) Mikey Minicomix

AND STILL ABOVE ALL #4
$5 / 23 pgs
This far-above-average zine compiles a variety of stories and other writings that generally fall somewhere within the Venn diagram of Boston and hardcore, interspersed with various cool artwork and answers to philosophical questions asked of a member of the band Mil-Spec. Finding a dog's head in the microwave of a 24-hour convenience store? Selling "Yankees Suck" shirts at Fenway Park? The Allstonian origin story of modern-day slang "The Feeling?" Instructions for building a DIY sensory deprivation chamber? All of it and more are in here, with writing that is descriptive, funny, cynical, and warrants multiple reads. Although the content and aesthetic are a little different than a zine like, say, *Gratitude*, it's clear that this is a product of the same pool of Boston hardcore minds, and a fan of one would be a fan of the other and vice versa. (DG)
advancedperspective.bigcartel.com

BRAINSCAN #33
$5 / 64 pgs
Brainscan take a new turn in their thirty-third issue. A few years ago Alex started being intentional about practicing witchcraft, and in that process started writing a zine about it. She describes her practice as "agnostic secular witchcraft," meaning a rejection of neo-paganism and Wicca in favor of personalized rituals based on the seasonal changes of the earth, altar building, and finding magic in the everyday. She rejects the materialism of modern magic in favor of using items gathered from nature and thrift stores to practice magic with. If you are familiar with Alex's journey outside of magic this is kind of an explanation of her newfound path that was happening behind the scenes in her previous zines, in response to an emotionally heavy time in her life. Also included is a pretty basic 101 guide on white witch etiquette (while it is not exactly called this, the author is white and speaks from their own experience as a white person, and assumes their entire audience is white) asking you not to culturally appropriate, understand genocide and theft of indigenous practices in North America, and to not only reject the gender essentialism of modern Wicca, but also the false dichotomy of black and white magic. Included in the back is a list of resources for books, Tumblrs, and websites where you can learn more about secular witchcraft. (AP)
Portland Button Works, 1505 N. Bryant Street, Portland, OR 97217

CHEAP TOYS #20
$2 / 60 pgs
Cheap Toys #20 is a beautifully produced small zine with text placed over B&W photos and hand drawings. I liked the heft and aesthetic of this zine immediately, and especially enjoyed the map of Marseille that lays out certain choice destinations. Most of the content of this zine is in French—which I don't read—so I can only comment on the English parts. Those included an introduction to an anarchist filmography that is in development, a report on punk in Monaco, stories from a tour of the American Midwest, library reviews, and a short bit on an event called Carnaval. Perhaps due to the translation, the last piece was rather hard to follow, save for the last few paragraphs, which were a poignant capturing of a wild and radical night in the streets with the people. There seem to be a lot of interesting things happening in this zine so if you're able to read French definitely pick it up. (KS)
50, Rue Consolat 13001 Marseille, FRANCE

GO TRESPASSING! #1 & 2
Free / 18 & 46 pgs
The first issue of *Go Trespassing!* is a comic zine written by a trans woman in the Bay Area. The comics within are episodic adventures of Lotus, who serves as an avatar of the author. The first issue serves up slice of life moments, some of which are pretty funny. The strongest moments are the ones which deal directly with Lotus's dysphoria. These moments are not comedic, but instead provide a powerful and honest view into the anxious thought patterns that dysphoria creates. This comic could serve as a good tool for potential trans allies and may help them understand just what it means to be a trans woman. Ditching the avatar and comedic aspects entirely, the second issue of *Go Trespassing!* is solely about the personal experiences of the author as she transitions. Written over of the course of two years, this second issue features a number of brief essays along with some accompanying illustrations. All of these essays describe her trauma. Whether it be the disbelief that her friends express when she comes out, her anxiety about passing, her experiences as a spectacle for cis people, or the microaggressions she experiences every day, the author makes clear over and over just how much bullshit she has experiences solely because of her gender identity. She excels at describing the grief and pain that she experiences, and yet she also describes her will to fight and her need to survive and love. Ultimately, this is a harrowing zine, and her blunt honesty is to be commended. (JD)
PO Box 31743, Oakland, CA 94604 / basementink@live.com

KISS OFF #16
$4 / 58 pgs
Kiss Off #16 is a nicely done work, with typewriter text set against small pages or black and white photo reproductions, suggesting the real "love of the craft" sort of cut and paste layout I enjoy. The content is largely framed around moving back to Toronto after a breakup and rediscovering life. There's poignant writing in here including parts on breaking up, a bit on making lists, and one on admiring Lou Reed

playing Lou Reed in a movie trying to write a Lou Reed song about the Berlin Wall falling. There's also a little about seeing the Weakerthans long after the writer's youthful appreciation of them morphed into a perspective on how their music seemed like "a dress rehearsal" for what one goes through in life. The whole zine has the feel of a Weakerthans album—capturing heartbreak well and the preponderance of modern life spectacles that we use a lense for seeing the world (zine readings, list making, the banality of city living). There are time jumps throughout the zine that made me confused about whether this whole thing takes place in a short amount of time or over years, especially since near the end there's a vignette-esque stroll through many events, titled "Several Years Later." The whole thing concludes on a real nice short bit about ending up in a bar because "I didn't want to go home." A random patron's response—"None of us do"—is a great moment that encapsulates the heady and drudging wandering of life that delivers us not to wherever we thought we would be—with art or music or love or life—but simply where we end up, a place we don't always like but whose reality we have to respect. (KS)
1274 Dundas Street West, Apt 2, Toronto, ON M6J1X7 CANADA

JUST FILE UNDER PUNK #4
Free / 14 pgs
Kind of a mixed bag. Punk zine fare: write-ups of old and recent shows, reviews, interviews with Crisis Alert, Clowns, and Litige, waxing about pop punk but not differentiating between Jawbreaker and Nerf Herder—though maybe there's nothing to differentiate? The writing is inconsistent and sometimes gets me excited about something I wasn't already familiar with. At other times it strikes me as boring, naïve, or obvious. That said, the layouts are good, and th author does shine some light on some lesser-known Australian stuff, which is cool. (DG)
no contact info included

LOCAL VOCALS: YOUR GUIDE TO KICK-ASS KARAOKE
$3 / 19 pgs
The second karaoke zine I've gotten in the last few months (both out of the LA area). This one draws on personal experience to lay out the various types of karaoke singers and crowds, along with advice on picking out songs, getting a good delivery, and practical etiquette that also applies to plenty of other "going out" contexts. The writing tone is definitely enthusiastic, even when critical, and I could see this appealing to both novices who want to get some footing, and karaoke regulars who may nod in agreement at the observations in here. (DG)
Kari Tervo, PO Box 7831, Beverly Hills, CA 90212 / beehat2013@gmail.com / etsy.com/shop/sweetmayhemzinery

LA MAMA VIDA: REMEMBERING MOTHERHOOD
$4 / 22 pgs
Brenda, who brought you the zine *Xicanistas & Punkeristas: Say It Loud!*, wrote this zine about her pregnancy and new life as a mother. She gives the backstory of her mother and grandmother who came before her and puts herself in place next to them to continue the traditions and legacy of her ancestors. She speaks to her relationship to sexuality and reproduction and how racism, patriarchy, and capitalism have tried to shape that and how she has resisted, rallying her fellow gender marginalized POC to fight back against cuts to funding for basic reproductive services. Also included is a poem, writing about the practice of ceremony in everyday life and how it is connected to the nourishment of the body. Brenda ends this zine with her turbulent birth experience, which has a really triumphant ending. (AP)
zinesrasquache@gmail.com / zinesrasquache.tumblr.com

THEE NATIONAL TEEN SET OUTSIDER #33
$1 / 36 pgs
A tiny, packed, and killer read from Rochester, with enough contributors for the content to be completely varied, but not all over the fucking place. There is an interview with Tony Erba, an ode to the late, great Don Rickles, a sweet UFO based rant by Chris Pittman, a tiny bio on Stiv Bators, one wild person's take on radical(ish) polyamory, and one completely, ridiculously (and intentionally) poorly written piece about some bullshit that I couldn't force myself to read. The rest of it was fuckin' great! There's a ton to read crammed in this little shit, but not so much that you have to squint. I can't wait to read the hell out of the next one. (DZ)
W. Carroll, 32 Edmonds Street #1, Rochester, NY 14607

SLEEVES
$13 / 56 pgs
Put another artist in my "How the hell have I not heard of this person?" file. Ivan Brun's collection of images they have created for punk shirts, records, comics, and posters from 1989–2016 is pretty fucking stellar. Sure, you can see Moebius and Pushead influences aplenty in their early work, but after decades, Brun lays down their own vision of dark, deep, affecting images. I sat down in a school bus converted into a bourgeois hotel in wine country for what I thought was going to be—what I had terribly prejudged to be—another boring post-apocalyptic spiky mohawked "anarchist" comic. Thank Jeebus I got this instead. Not linear in any way, style wise or story wise, just cool haunting images to freak out on. (DZ)
Ivan Brun, 57 Rue Du 1er Mars 1943, 69100 Villeurbanne, FRANCE

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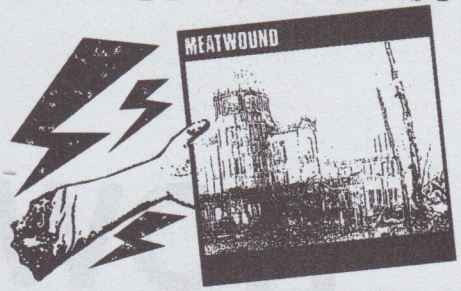

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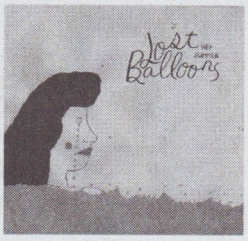

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